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COMMENTARY

ON A

HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS,

MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE.

VOL. III.

THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY,

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COMMENTARY

ON A

HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS,

MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE.

BY JOHN CALVIN, Jean

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COLLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S FRENCH VERSION,

BY THE REV. WILLIAM PRINGLE.

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COMMENTARY

ON A

HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXI. 10. And when he entered into Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11. And the multitudes said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee. 12. And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and drove out all that sold and bought in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves; 13. And said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers. 14. And the blind and lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. 15. When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful works	XI. 11. And the Lord entered[1] into Jerusalem, and into the temple; and when he had looked around on all things, and it was now evening, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. 12. And the next day, when they departed from Bethany, he was hungry. 13. And when he saw at a distance a fig-tree having leaves, he came, if perhaps he would find any thing on it.[2] And when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season of figs. 14. And Jesus answering said to the fig-tree, Let no man eat fruit from thee henceforth for ever. And his disciples heard it. 15. And they come to Jerusalem. And Jesus entered into the temple, and began	XIX. 39. And some of the Pharisees out of the multitude said to him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40. To whom he said, I say to you, that if these be silent, the stones will cry out.[3] (*A little after.*) 45. And having entered into the

[1] "Ainsi le Seigneur entra;"—"thus the Lord entered."

[2] "Il y alla pour veoir s'il y trouveroit quelque chose;"—"he went to it to see if he would find any thing on it."

[3] "Les pierres soudain crieront;"—"the stones will suddenly cry out."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
which he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! they were enraged,[1] 16. And said to him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith to them, Yes; and have you never read, Out of the mouth[2] of infants and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? 17. And, leaving them, he went out of the city into Bethany, and lodged there. 18. And in the morning, returning to the city, he was hungry. 19. And when he saw a fig-tree near the road, he came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only. And he said to it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever; and immediately the fig-tree withered. 20. And when his disciples saw it, they wondered, saying, How quickly is the fig-tree withered! 21. And Jesus answering said to them, Verily I say to you, If you have faith, and do not doubt, not only will you do what has taken place in the fig-tree, but also, if you shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and thrown into the sea, it shall be done. 22. And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing,[3] you shall receive.	to drive out those who sold and bought in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves; 16. And did not suffer any man to carry a vessel through the temple. 17. And taught, saying to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called by all nations a house of prayer? But you have made it a den of robbers. 18. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they would put him to death; for they dreaded him, because the whole multitude admired his doctrine. 19. And when it was evening, he went out of the city. 20. And in the morning, passing by the fig-tree, they saw that it was dried up from the root.[4] 21. And Peter, remembering, saith to him, Rabbi,[5] lo, that fig-tree which thou cursedst is dried up! 22. And Jesus answering saith to them, Have faith in God. 23. Verily I say to you, Whoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and thrown into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith shall be, he shall have whatever he saith. 24. Therefore I say to you, Whatever you ask, praying, believe that you will receive it, and you shall have it.	temple, he began to drive out those who sold and bought in it, 46. Saying to them, It is written, My house is a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers. 47. And he taught daily in the temple. And the chief priests, and scribes, and rulers of the people, sought to put him to death, 48. And did not find what to do; for all the people hung upon his lips, while they were hearing him.

THERE is a difference between Matthew and Mark in their narrative of the *withering of the fig-tree;* for Matthew says that it was on the day after that Christ made a public

[1] "Ils en furent indignez;"—"they were enraged at it."
[2] "Par la bouche;"—"by the mouth."
[3] "Ayans foy;"—"having faith."
[4] "Estoit seché jusqu'aux racines;"—"was withered even to the roots."
[5] "Maistre;"—"Master."

appearance as King, while Mark appears to throw it back to the following day. But the solution is easy; for they agree in this respect, that Christ, on the day after that he made his solemn entrance into the city, cursed the tree; only Mark states what Matthew had omitted, that the occurrence was observed by the disciples on the following day.[1] So then, though Mark has stated more distinctly the order of time, he makes no contradiction.

He appears to differ more openly both from Matthew and from Luke in the narrative of chastising the traders;[2] for while both of them declare that Christ, as soon as he *entered into the city and temple, drove out those who sold and bought*, Mark simply says that he looked around on all things, but has thrown back the *driving* of them *out* till another day.[3] But I reconcile them in this way, that Mark, not having spoken about the purifying of the temple, afterwards inserts it, though not in its proper place. He relates that, on the first day, Christ came into the temple, and there *looked round on all things*.[4] Now why did he look so earnestly, except for the purpose of correcting something that was wrong? For, having been formerly accustomed to pay frequent visits to the temple, it was not the novelty of the sight that affected him. Now as Mark ought immediately to have added, that *those who sold and bought in the temple* were *driven out* of it, he says that Christ *went out* of the city; but, having omitted what was worthy of being related, he inserts it afterwards.

But perhaps some will be more inclined to believe that, in this narrative also, Mark observed the order of time, which the other two Evangelists had disregarded; for though they appear to indicate an uninterrupted succession of events, yet as they do not name a particular day, there would be no

1 "Que le jour ensuyvant les disciples prindrent garde à ce qui estoit advenu à l'arbre;"—"that, on the following day, the disciples took notice of what had happened to the tree."

2 "En l'histoire des marchans chassez hors du temple;"—"in the narrative of the merchants driven out of the temple."

3 "Et puis il remet à l'autre jour ensuyvant ceste reformation du temple;"—"and then he throws back to the other following day that reformation of the temple."

4 "Et là regarda tout autour ce qui s'y faisoit;"—"and there looked all around at what was done in it."

impropriety in dividing what we find to be connected in their writings. For my own part, however, I prefer the conjecture which I stated first; for it is probable that this demonstration of his power was made by Christ in presence of a large multitude. But any one who will consider how little care the Evangelists bestowed on pointing out dates will not stumble at this diversity in the narrative.

Matthew XXI. 10. *When he entered into Jerusalem.* Matthew says that *the city was moved*, in order to inform us that the transaction did not take place secretly, or by stealth, but in the presence of all the people, and that the priests and scribes were not ignorant of it. Under this despicable aspect of the flesh the majesty of the Spirit was apparent; for how would they have endured that Christ should be conducted into the city, attended by the splendour of royalty, with so great danger to themselves, if they had not been seized with astonishment? The substance of it therefore is, that Christ's entrance was not made in a private manner, and that his enemies abstained from opposing it, not because they treated him with contempt, but rather because they were restrained by secret fear; for God had struck them with such alarm, that they durst not make any attempt. At the same time, the Evangelist glances at the careless indifference of the city, and commends the piety of those who have just reached it; for when the inhabitants, on hearing the noise, inquire, *Who is this?* it is manifest that they do not belong to the number of Christ's followers.

12. *And Jesus entered into the temple.* Though Christ frequently ascended *into the temple*, and though this abuse continually met his eye, twice only did he stretch out his hand to correct it; once, at the commencement of his embassy,[1] and now again, when he was near the end of his course. But though disgraceful and ungodly confusion reigned throughout, and though the temple, with its sacrifices, was devoted to destruction, Christ reckoned it enough to ad-

[1] "Quand il commença à exercer son office d'ambassadeur;"—"when he began to discharge his office as ambassador."

minister twice an open reproof of the profanation of it. Accordingly, when he made himself known as a Teacher and Prophet sent by God, he took upon himself the office of purifying the temple, in order to arouse the Jews, and make them more attentive; and this first narrative is given by John only in the second chapter of his Gospel. But now, towards the end of his course, claiming again for himself the same power, he warns the Jews of the pollutions of the temple, and at the same time points out that a new restoration is at hand.

And yet there is no reason to doubt that he declared himself to be both King and High Priest, who presided over the temple and the worship of God. This ought to be observed, lest any private individual should think himself entitled to act in the same manner. That zeal, indeed, by which Christ was animated to do this, ought to be held in common by all the godly; but lest any one, under the pretence of imitation, should rush forward without authority, we ought to see what our calling demands, and how far we may proceed according to the commandment of God. If the Church of God have contracted any pollutions, all the children of God ought to burn with grief; but as God has not put arms into the hands of all, let private individuals groan, till God bring the remedy. I do acknowledge that they are worse than stupid who are not displeased at the pollution of the temple of God, and that it is not enough for them to be inwardly distressed, if they do not avoid the contagion, and testify with their mouth, whenever an opportunity presents itself, that they desire to see a change for the better. But let those who do not possess public authority oppose by their tongue, which they have at liberty, those vices which they cannot remedy with their hands.

But it is asked, Since Christ saw the temple filled with gross superstitions, why did he only correct one that was light, or, at least, more tolerable than others? I reply, Christ did not intend to restore to the ancient custom all the sacred rites, and did not select greater or smaller abuses for correction, but had only this object in view, to show by one visible token, that God had committed to him the office of purifying

the temple, and, at the same time, to point out that the worship of God had been corrupted by a disgraceful and manifest abuse. Pretexts, indeed, were not wanting for that custom of keeping a market, which relieved the people from trouble, that they might not have far to go to find sacrifices; and next, that they might have at hand those pieces of money which any man might choose to offer. Nor was it within the holy place that the *money-changers* sat, or that animals intended for sacrifice were exposed to sale, but only within the court, to which the designation of *the temple* is sometimes applied; but as nothing was more at variance with the majesty of *the temple*, than that a market should be erected there for selling goods, or that bankers should sit there for matters connected with exchange, this profanation was not to be endured. And Christ inveighed against it the more sharply, because it was well known that this custom had been introduced by the avarice of the priests for the sake of dishonest gain. For as one who enters a market well-stocked with various kinds of merchandise, though he does not intend to make a purchase, yet, in consequence of being attracted by what he sees, changes his mind, so the priests spread nets in order to obtain offerings, that they might trick every person out of some gain.

13. *It is written.* Christ quotes two passages taken out of two Prophets; the one from Isa. lvi. 7, and the other from Jer. vii. 11. What *was written* by Isaiah agreed with the circumstances of the time; for in that passage is predicted the calling of the Gentiles. Isaiah, therefore, promises that God will grant, not only that the temple shall recover its original splendour, but likewise that *all nations shall flow to it*, and that the whole world shall agree in true and sincere piety.[1] He speaks, no doubt, metaphorically; for the spiritual worship of God, which was to exist under the reign of Christ, is shadowed out by the prophets under the figures of the law. Certainly this was never fulfilled, that all nations went up to Jerusalem to worship God; and therefore, when he declares

[1] "A la vraye et droite cognoissance de Dieu;"—"in the true and right knowledge of God."

that the temple will be *a place of prayer for all nations*, this mode of expression is equivalent to saying, that the nations must be gathered into the Church of God, that with one voice they may worship the true God, along with the children of Abraham. But since he mentions *the temple*, so far as it then was the visible abode of religion, Christ justly reproaches the Jews with having applied it to totally different purposes from those to which it had been dedicated. The meaning therefore is: God intended that this temple should exist till now, as a sign on which all his worshippers should fix their eyes; and how base and wicked is it to profane it by thus turning it into a market?

Besides, in the time of Christ, that *temple* was actually *a house of prayer;* that is, so long as the Law, with its shadows, remained in force. But it began to be *a house of prayer for all nations*, when out of it resounded the doctrine of the Gospel, by which the whole world was to be united in one common faith. And though shortly afterwards it was totally overthrown, yet even in the present day the fulfilment of this prophecy is manifest; for, since *out of Zion went forth the law*, (Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 2,) those who wish to pray aright must look to that beginning. I do acknowledge that there is no distinction of places, for it is the will of the Lord that men should call upon Him everywhere; but as believers, who profess to worship the God of Israel, are said to *speak in the language of Canaan*, (Isa. xix. 18,) so they are also said to come *into the temple*, because out of it flowed the true religion. It is likewise the fountain of the waters, which, enlarged to an astonishing degree within a short period, flow in great abundance, and give life to those that drink them, as Ezekiel (xlvii. 9) mentions,[1] which, going out from the temple, spread, as Zechariah (xiv. 8) says, from the rising to the setting sun. Though in the present day we make use of *temples* (or *churches*) for holding the holy assemblies, yet it is for a different reason; for, since Christ was manifested, no outward representation

[1] "Et aussi c'est ceste source des quatre fleuves desquels Ezekiel (xlvii. 2) parle, qui doyvent arrouser les quatre coins du monde;"—"and this is also the source of the four rivers of which Ezekiel (xlvii. 2) speaks, which are to water the four quarters of the world."

of him under shadows is held out to us, such as the fathers anciently had under the Law.

It must also be observed, that by the word *prayer* the prophet expresses the whole worship of God; for, though there was at that time a great variety and abundance of religious rites, yet God intended briefly to show what was the object of all those rites; namely, that they might worship him spiritually, as is more clearly expressed in the fiftieth psalm, where also God comprehends under *prayer* all the exercises of religion.

But you have made it a den of robbers. Christ means that the complaint of Jeremiah (vii. 11) applied equally well to his own time, in which the temple was not less corrupted. The prophet directs his reproof against hypocrites, who, through confidence in *the temple*, allowed themselves greater liberty in sinning. For, as it was the design of God to employ outward symbols, as a sort of rudiments, for instructing the Jews in true religion, so they satisfied themselves with the empty pretence of *the temple*, as if it were enough to give their attention to outward ceremonies; just as it is customary with hypocrites to *change the truth of God into a lie*, (Rom. i. 25.) But the prophet exclaims that God is not bound to *the temple*, or tied to ceremonies, and therefore that they falsely boast of the name of *the temple*, which they *had made a den of robbers*. For as *robbers* in their *dens* sin with greater hardihood, because they trust that they will escape punishment, so by means of a false covering of godliness hypocrites grow more bold, so that they almost hope to deceive God. Now as the metaphor of *a den* includes all corruptions, Christ properly applies the passage of the prophet to the present occasion.

Mark adds, that Christ gave orders *that no man should carry a vessel through the temple;* that is, he did not permit any thing to be seen there that was inconsistent with religious services; for by the word *vessel* the Hebrews denote any kind of utensil. In short, Christ took away whatever was at variance with the reverence and majesty of the temple.

14. *And the blind and lame came to him.* That the autho-

rity which Christ had claimed for himself out of the usual course might not be suspected of rashness, he supported it by miracles. He therefore *cured the blind and lame in the temple*, in order to proclaim that the rights and honour of Messiah truly belonged to him; for by these marks the prophets describe him. Hence we again perceive what I hinted a little ago, that it is not every one of the people who is called to imitate this action of Christ, lest he inconsiderately raise himself to the throne of the Messiah. We ought indeed to believe that the *lame and blind*, who were *cured*, were witnesses of the divine power of Christ, as if God, by his voice from heaven, approved what had been proclaimed by the multitude.[1]

15. *When the chief priests and scribes saw.* Luke relates that the Pharisees began to grumble, while he was still on the road.[2] It was the disciples that were then crying out: the others wished to have them silenced. Christ replied, that it was in vain for them to make opposition; because God would rather make *the stones cry out* than permit the reign of His Son to be forgotten. It is probable that, as the *crying out* was not diminished, and as even *the children* now joined in it, *the scribes and priests* were roused to still fiercer indignation, and then commenced a new attack on Christ. They appear indirectly to reproach him by alleging that he is desirous to obtain the praises of *children*.

But we must observe whence their displeasure arose. That it was connected with ungodly malice and outrageous contempt of God is evident from the fact, that his miracles gave them not less uneasiness than the shouts of applause. But I now inquire about some more special reason. What was it that chiefly vexed them? Now we know how eagerly they contended for their authority; for the object to which their zeal carried them was, that the tyranny, which they

1 "Comme si Dieu eust d'enhaut approuvé par sa voix les louanges que le peuple avoit proclamees en l'honneur de Christ;"—"as if God had from on high approved by his voice the praises which the people had proclaimed in honour of Christ."

2 "Christ estant encore en chemin;"—"Christ being still on the road."

had once claimed, might continue to be enjoyed by them; and it was no slight diminution of their power, if the people were at liberty to bestow on Christ the title of King. Even in trifling matters they wished their decisions to be regarded as oracles,[1] so that it might not be permitted to approve or reject any thing but according to their pleasure. They therefore reckon it to be foolish and unreasonable, that the people should confer the title of Messiah on one whom they do not treat with any respect. And certainly, if they had done their duty, it would have been proper for them to direct the whole people, and to go before them as their leaders. For the priests had been appointed, that *from their lips* all might seek the knowledge of *the Law*, and, in short, that they might be the *messengers* and interpreters *of the God of armies*, (Mal. ii. 7.) But as they had basely extinguished the light of truth, Christ appropriately replies, that they gain nothing by endeavouring to suppress the doctrine of salvation, for it will rather break out from *the stones*.

There is likewise an implied admission; for Christ does not deny that it is an unnatural order for the uneducated multitude and *children* to be the first to magnify with their voice the coming of the Messiah, but as the truth is wickedly suppressed by those who ought to have been its lawful witnesses, it is not wonderful if God raise up others, and—to their shame—make choice of *children*. Hence we derive no slight consolation; for though wicked men leave no stone unturned for concealing the reign of Christ, we learn from this passage that their efforts are in vain. They hope that, when some of the multitude, that is carrying forward the kingdom of Christ, shall have been put to death, and others shall be silenced by fear, they will gain their object. But God will disappoint them; for He will sooner give mouths and tongues to *stones* than allow the kingdom of His Son to be without witnesses.

16. *And have you never read?* The scribes and priests seize on this as an opportunity of calumniating Christ, that

[1] "Pour arrests ou revelations celestes;"—"as decisions or revelations from heaven."

he allows himself to be called a King by *children;* as it is always the custom of wicked people haughtily to despise the mean condition of the disciples of Christ. This malicious design Christ checks by a quotation from David, who makes even *infants* to be the heralds of the glory of God. Literally the words run, *Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings thou hast founded strength,* (Psalm viii. 2 ;) by which David means that, though every tongue were silent,[1] God needs no other orators to proclaim his power than mere *infants,* who are still hanging on their mothers' breasts. In themselves, no doubt, they are silent; but the wonderful providence of God, which shines in them, serves the purpose of splendid and powerful eloquence. For he who considers with himself how the child is formed in the mother's womb, is nourished there for nine months, afterwards comes into the world, and finds nourishment provided as soon as it is born, must not only acknowledge that God is the Creator of the world, but will be altogether carried away into admiration of Him.[2] Thus the sun and moon, though they are dumb creatures, are said to have a loud and distinct voice for singing the praises of God, (Psalm xix. 1, 2.) But since the praises of God are heard from the tongue of *infants,* Christ infers from this, that it is not strange if He cause them to be uttered by *children* who have already acquired the use of speech.

18. *And returning in the morning.* Between that solemn entrance of Christ, of which we have spoken, and the day of the Passover, he had passed the night in Bethany; and during the day he appeared in the temple for the purpose of teaching. Matthew and Mark relate what happened during that interval, that Christ, when *coming into the city, was hungry,* approached *a fig-tree,* and, *having found nothing on it but leaves, cursed it ;* and that the tree, which had been *cursed*

[1] "Quand toutes bouches seroyent closes, et toutes langues se tairoyent ;"—"though every mouth were closed, and every tongue were silent."

[2] "Mais aussi il entrera en une grande admiration de sa puissance et sagesse infinie ;"—"but also will greatly admire His infinite power and wisdom."

by his voice, *immediately withered*. I take for granted that Christ did not pretend hunger, but *was* actually *hungry;* for we know that he voluntarily became subject to the infirmities of the flesh, though by nature he was free and exempt from them.

But here lies the difficulty. How was he mistaken in seeking fruit on a tree that had none; more especially, when the season of fruit had not yet arrived? And again, Why was he so fiercely enraged against a harmless tree? But there would be no absurdity in saying, that as man, he did not know[1] the kind of tree; though it is possible that he approached it on purpose, with full knowledge of the result. Certainly it was not the fury of passion that led him to curse the tree, (for that would not only have been an unjust, but even a childish and ridiculous revenge;) but as hunger was troublesome to him according to the feeling of the flesh, he determined to overcome it by an opposite affection; that is, by a desire to promote the glory of the Father, as he elsewhere says, *My meat is to do the will of my Father*, (John iv. 34;) for at that time he was contending both with fatigue and with hunger. I am the more inclined to this conjecture, because hunger gave him an opportunity of performing a miracle and of teaching his disciples. So when he was pressed by hunger, and there was no food at hand, he finds a repast in another way; that is, by promoting the glory of God. He intended, however, to present in this tree an outward sign of the end which awaits hypocrites, and at the same time to expose the emptiness and folly of their ostentation.

19. *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth.* Let us learn from this what is the meaning of the word *curse*, namely, that the tree should be condemned to barrenness; as, on the other hand, God *blesses*, when by his voice he bestows fertility. It appears more clearly from *Mark*, that the fig-tree did not instantly wither, or, at least, that it was not observed by his disciples, until they saw it next day stripped of *leaves*. *Mark*, too, attributes to *Peter* what *Matthew* attributes equally to all the disciples; but as Christ replies in the plural number,

[1] "Il n'a pas cognu de loin;"—"he did not know at a distance."

it may naturally be inferred that one put the question in the name of all.

21. *And Jesus answering.* The use of the miracle is still farther extended by Christ, in order to excite his disciples to faith and confidence. By *Mark*, the general exhortation is placed first, *to have faith in God;* and then follows the promise, that they would obtain by faith whatever they asked from God. *To have faith in God* means, to expect, and to be fully assured of obtaining, from God whatever we need. But as faith, if we have any, breaks out immediately into prayer, and penetrates into the treasures of the grace of God, which are held out to us in the word, in order to enjoy them, so Christ adds *prayer* to *faith;* for if he had only said that we shall have whatever we wish, some would have thought that *faith* was presumptuous or too careless. And therefore Christ shows that those only are believers who, relying on his goodness and promises, betake themselves to him with humility.

This passage is exceedingly adapted to point out the power and nature of *faith;* that it is a certainty, relying on the goodness of God, which does not admit of doubt. For Christ does not acknowledge as believers any but those who are fully convinced that God is reconciled to them, and do not doubt that he will give what they ask. Hence we perceive by what a diabolical contrivance the Papists are bewitched, who mingle *faith* with *doubt*, and even charge us with foolish presumption, if we venture to appear before God under the conviction of His fatherly regard toward us. But this benefit derived from Christ is that on which Paul chiefly dwells, when he says that *by the faith of him we have boldness to approach to God with confidence*, (Eph. iii. 12.)

This passage shows also that the true test of *faith* lies in *prayer*. If it be objected, that those prayers are never heard, *that mountains should be thrown into the sea*, the answer is easy. Christ does not give a loose rein to the wishes of men, that they should desire any thing at their pleasure, when he

places *prayer* after the rule of faith;[1] for in this way the Spirit must of necessity hold all our affections by the bridle of the word of God, and bring them into obedience. Christ demands a firm and undoubting confidence of obtaining an answer; and whence does the human mind obtain that confidence but from the word of God? We now see then that Christ promises nothing to his disciples, unless they keep themselves within the limits of the good pleasure of God.

Luke XIX. 47. *And he taught daily in the temple.* Mark and Luke point out, *first*, what was the class of men of which the Church consisted, namely, of the despised multitude; and again, what enemies Christ had, namely, the *priests* and *scribes*, and all the *rulers*. Now this is a part of the folly of the cross, that God, passing by the excellence of the world, chooses what is foolish, weak, and despised. *Secondly*, they relate that those worthy guardians of the Church of God sought an occasion of putting Christ to death, by which their wicked impiety was discovered; for though there had been good grounds for pursuing Christ, yet they had no right to proceed to murder after the manner of robbers, or secretly to hire assassins. *Thirdly*, they show that the wicked conspiracy of those men was frustrated, because, by the secret purpose of God, Christ was appointed to the death of the cross.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXI. 23. And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him, saying, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee that authority?[2] 24. And Jesus answering said to them, I also will ask	XI. 27. And they come again to Jerusalem; and while he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and scribes, and elders, come to him. 28. And they say to him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee that authority[2] to do these things? 29.	XX. 1. And it happened on one of those days, while he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, the chief priests, and scribes, with the elders, came upon him, 2. And spoke to him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or

[1] "Veu qu'il met les prieres apres la regle de foy, et veut qu'elles soyent conduites par icelle;"—"since he places prayers after the rule of faith, and wishes that they should be regulated by it."

[2] "Et qui est celuy qui t'a donné ceste authorité?"—"And who is he that gave thee that authority?"

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
you something, which if you shall tell me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25. Whence was the baptism of John? From heaven, or from men? But they thought within themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe him? 26. But if we shall say, From men, we dread the multitude, for they all hold John for a prophet. 27. And answering Jesus, they said, We do not know. And he saith to them, Neither do I teli you by what authority I do these things.	And Jesus answering said to them, I will also ask you something, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30. Whether was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer me. 31. And they thought within themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe him? 32. But if we say, From men, they dreaded the people;[1] for all reckoned John that he was truly a prophet. 33. And they answering say to Jesus, We do not know. And Jesus answering saith to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.	who is he that gave thee that authority? 3. And Jesus answering said to them, I will also ask you something, and answer me. 4. Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? 5. But they reasoned within themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe him? 6. But if we shall say, From men, all the people will stone us; for they are convinced that John is a prophet. 7. And they answered, That they did not know whence it was. 8. And Jesus said to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Matthew XXI. 23. *By what authority doest thou these things?* As the other schemes and open attempts to attack Christ had not succeeded, the *priests and scribes* now attempt, by indirect methods, if they may possibly cause him to desist from the practice of teaching. They do not debate with him as to the doctrine itself, whether it was true or not—for already had they often enough attacked him in vain on that question—but they raise a dispute as to his calling and commission. And, indeed, there were plausible grounds; for since a man ought not, of his own accord, to intermeddle either with the honour of priesthood, or with the prophetical office, but ought to wait for the calling of God, much less would any man be at liberty to claim for himself the title of Messiah, unless it were evident that he had been chosen by God; for he must have been appointed, not only by the voice of God, but likewise by *an oath*, as it is written, (Psalm cx. 4; Heb. vii. 21.)

[1] "Nous craignous le peuple;"—"we dread the people."

But when the divine majesty of Christ had been attested by so many miracles, they act maliciously and wickedly in inquiring whence he came, as if they had been ignorant of all that he had done. For what could be more unreasonable than that, after seeing the hand of God openly displayed in curing the lame and blind, they should doubt if he were a private individual who had rashly assumed this authority? Besides, more than enough of evidence had been already laid before them, that Christ was sent from heaven, so that nothing was farther from their wish than to approve of the performances of Christ, after having learned that God was the Author of them. They therefore insist on this, that he is not a lawful minister of God, because he had not been chosen by their votes, as if the power had dwelt solely with them. But though they had been the lawful guardians of the Church, still it was monstrous to rise up against God. We now understand why Christ did not make a direct reply to them. It was because they wickedly and shamelessly interrogated him about a matter which was well known.

25. *Whence was the baptism of John?* Christ interrogates them about *the baptism of John*, not only to show that they were unworthy of any authority, because they had despised a holy prophet of God, but also to convict them, by their own reply, of having impudently pretended ignorance of a matter with which they were well acquainted. For we must bear in mind why *John* was sent, what was his commission, and on what subject he most of all insisted. He had been sent as Christ's herald. He was not deficient in his duty, and claims nothing more for himself than to *prepare the way of the Lord*, (Mal. iii. 1; Luke vii. 27.) In short, he had pointed out Christ with the finger, and had declared him to be the only Son of God. From what source then do the scribes mean that the new authority of Christ should be proved, since it had been fully attested by the preaching *of John?*

We now see that Christ employed no cunning stratagem in order to escape, but fully and perfectly answered the

question which had been proposed; for it was impossible to acknowledge that *John* was a servant of God, without acknowledging that he was Himself the Lord. He did not therefore shelter arrogant men,[1] who, without any commission, but out of their own hardihood, take upon themselves a public office; nor did he countenance, by his example, the sophistical art of suppressing the truth, as many crafty men falsely plead his authority. I do acknowledge that, if wicked men lay snares for us, we ought not always to reply in the same way, but ought to be prudently on our guard against their malice, yet in such a manner that truth may not be left without a proper defence.

Baptism denotes here not only the sign of washing, but the whole ministry *of John;* for Christ intended to draw out a reply, Was *John* a true and lawful prophet of God, or an impostor? Yet this mode of expression contains a useful doctrine, *Is the baptism of John from God, or from men?* For hence we infer, that no doctrine and no sacrament ought to be received among the godly, unless it be evident that it has come from God; and that men are not at liberty to make any invention of this nature. The discourse relates to *John*, whom our Lord, in another passage, raises, by a remarkable commendation, above all the prophets, (Luke vii. 26, 28.) Yet Christ declares that his *baptism* ought not to be received, unless it had been enjoined by God. What, then, must we say of the pretended sacraments, which men of no authority have foolishly introduced without any command from God? For Christ plainly declares by these words, that the whole government of the Church depends on the will of God in such a manner, that men have no right to introduce any thing from themselves.

But they thought within themselves. Here we perceive the impiety of the priests. They do not inquire what is true, nor do they put the question to their own conscience;[2] and they are so base as to choose rather to shuffle than to acknow-

[1] "Ainsi donc Christ n'a point voulu yci armer de response des glorieux et outrecuidez;"—"so then Christ did not intend here to arm, by his reply, haughty and presumptuous men."

[2] "Et n'examinent point la chose selon leur conscience;"—"and do not examine the thing according to their conscience."

ledge what they know to be true, that their tyranny may not be impaired. In this manner, all wicked men, though they pretend to be desirous of learning, shut the gate of truth, if they feel it to be opposed to their wicked desires. So then Christ does not allow those men to go without a reply, but sends them away ashamed and confounded, and, by bringing forward the testimony of *John*, sufficiently proves that he is furnished with divine power.[1]

Matthew.

XXI. 28. But what think you?[2] A man had two sons, and, coming to the first, he said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. 29. And he answering said, I will not;[3] but afterwards he repented, and went. 30. And coming to the other, he spoke in the same manner. But he answering said, I [go,] Sir, and went not. 31. Which of the two did what his father wished?[4] And they say to him, The first. Jesus saith to them, Verily I say to you, That the publicans and the harlots will go before you into the kingdom of God. 32. For John came to you by the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And you, when you had seen it, were not moved by repentance[5] to believe in him.

This conclusion shows what is the object of the parable, when Christ prefers to the scribes and priests those who were generally accounted infamous and held in detestation; for he unmasks those hypocrites,[6] that they may no longer boast of being the ministers of God, or hold out a pretended zeal for godliness. Though their ambition, and pride, and cruelty, and avarice, were known to all, yet they wished to be reckoned quite different persons. And when, but a little ago, they attacked Christ, they falsely alleged that they were anxious about the order of the Church, as if they were its faithful and honest guardians. Since they attempt to practise such gross imposition on God and men, Christ rebukes their impudence

[1] "Qu'il est muni et authorizé d'une puissance divine;"—"that he is furnished and authorized by a divine power."

[2] "Mais que vous en semble?"—"But what think you of it?"

[3] "Je n'y veux point aller;"—"I will not go to it."

[4] "Lequel des deux feit la volonté du pere?"—"Which of the two did the will of the father?"

[5] "Vous n'avez point eu de repentance apres;"—"you had not repentance afterwards."

[6] "Car il oste a ces hypocrites le masque duquel ils se couvroyent;"—"for he takes away from those hypocrites the mask with which they covered themselves."

by showing that they were at the greatest possible distance from what they boasted, and were so far from deserving that elevation with which they flattered themselves, that they ranked below *the publicans and the harlots*. For as to the profession which they made of being eminent in observing the worship of God, and of being zealots of the Law, Christ tells them that it is quite as if *a son* were, in words, to promise obedience to *his father*, but afterwards to deceive him.[1] So far as regards *the publicans and the harlots*, he does not excuse their vices, but compares their dissolute life to the obstinacy of a rebellious and debauched *son*, who at first throws off his father's authority; but shows that they are greatly preferable to the scribes and Pharisees in this respect, that they do not continue to the end in their vices, but, on the contrary, submit gently and obediently to the yoke which they had fiercely rejected. We now perceive the design of Christ. Not only does he reproach the priests and scribes with obstinately opposing God, and not repenting, though so frequently admonished, but he strips them of the honour of which they were unworthy, because their ungodliness was worse than the lasciviousness of *the harlots*.

30. *I, Sir.*[2] This phrase is borrowed from the Hebrew language; for, when the Hebrews wish to offer their services, and to declare that they are ready to obey,[3] they speak in this manner, "Here I am, Sir." It is a laudable virtue in itself, as soon as God has spoken, to yield to Him ready and cheerful obedience; and Christ does not here give the commendation to slowness. But as both are improper—to delay before doing your duty, and to promise what you do not perform—Christ shows that this hypocrisy is less to be endured than the fierceness which, in process of time, is subdued.

32. *For John came.* As *John* was a faithful servant of God, whatever he taught Christ ascribes to God himself. It might have been more fully expressed thus: God came

[1] "Et puis qu'il l'abusast, et n'en feist rien;"—"and afterwards deceived him, and did nothing of it."

[2] "Seigneur, j'y vay;"—"Sir, I go to it."

[3] "Qu'ils sont prests de faire ce qui leur sera commandé;"—"that they are ready to do what shall be commanded them."

pointing out *the way of righteousness* by the mouth of *John;* but as *John* spoke in the name of God, and not as a private individual, he is most properly named instead of God. Now this passage gives no small authority to the preaching of the word, when those persons are said to have been disobedient and rebellious against God, who despised the pious and holy warnings of a teacher whom He had sent.

There are some who give a more ingenious exposition of the word *righteousness*, and I allow them to enjoy their own opinion; but, for my own part, I think that it means nothing more than that *John's* doctrine was pure and right; as if Christ had said, that they had no good reason for rejecting him. When he says that *the publicans believed*, he does not mean that they assented in words, but that they sincerely embraced what they had heard. Hence we infer, that faith does not consist solely in a person's giving his assent to true doctrine, but that it embraces something greater and loftier, that the hearer, renouncing himself, devotes his life wholly to God. By saying that they were not moved even by such an example, he presents an aggravated view of their malice; for it was an evidence of the lowest depravity, not even to follow *the harlots and the publicans*.[1]

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXI. 33. Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, who planted a vineyard, and surrounded it by a ditch, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen, and went abroad. 34. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive its fruits.	XII. 1. And he began to speak to them by parables: A man planted a vineyard, and surrounded it by a hedge, and digged a ditch,[2] and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen, and went abroad. 2. And at the proper season he sent a servant to the husband-	XX. 9. And he began to speak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it to husbandmen, and went abroad for a long time. 10. And at the proper season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they might give him of the fruit of the vineyard; and they beat him,

[1] "Car ç'a este un signe de gens du tout depravez et desesperez, de ne suyvre point, à tout le moins quand les peugers et les paillardes leur monstrent le chemin;"—"For it was a mark of people altogether depraved and desperate, not to follow, at the very least, when *the publicans and the harlots* point out to them the road."

[2] "Et y fouyt une fosse pour les esgouts d'un pressoir;"—"and digged in it a ditch for the cistern of a wine-press."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
35. And the husbandmen, having seized his servants, wounded one, killed another, and stoned another. 36. Again, he sent other servants more numerous[1] than the first, and they did to them in the same manner. 37. And last of all he sent to them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38. And when the husbandmen saw his son, they said within themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance. 39. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40. When therefore the proprietor of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen? 41. They say to him, Since they are wicked, he will miserably destroy them, and will let his vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render to him the fruit in its seasons. 42. Jesus saith to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner;[2] this is done by the Lord, and is wonderful in our eyes?[3] 43. Therefore I say to you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding its fruits. 44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be bruised, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.	men to receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3. But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4. And again he sent to them another servant; and they threw stones at him, and bruised his head, and sent him away disgraced. 5. And again he sent another, and him they killed, and many others, beating some and killing some. 6. And while he had yet one son,[4] his well-beloved, he sent him also last to them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7. But the husbandmen said within themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. 8. And they seized him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. 9. What then will the proprietor of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and give the vineyard to others. 10. And have you not read this Scripture, The stone which the builders rejected is made the head	and sent him away empty. 11. And again he sent yet another servant; and him also they wounded, and treated shamefully, and sent away empty. 12. Again he sent also a third; but him also they wounded and drove out. 13. And the proprietor of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my well-beloved son; perhaps they will reverence him when they see him. 14. But when the husbandmen saw him, they thought within themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15. And they cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. What then shall the proprietor of the vineyard do to them? 16. He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and give the vineyard to others. And when they heard this, they said, God forbid. 17. And he looked at them, and said, What then is this that is written, The stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner? 18. Every one that shall fall on this stone

[1] "En plus grand nombre;"—"in greater number."

[2] "Est mise au principal lieu du coin;"—"is put in the chief place of the corner."

[3] "Devant nos yeux;"—"before our eyes."

[4] "Or voyant qu'il avoit encore un fils;"—"But perceiving that he had still one son."

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
ever it shall fall, it will crush him. 45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he spoke of them. 46. And though they sought to take him, they dreaded the multitudes, because they reckoned him a prophet.	of the corner; 11. This is done by the Lord, and is wonderful in our eyes?[1] 12. And they sought to take him, and dreaded the multitude; for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went away.	will be bruised; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will crush him. 19. And the chief priests and scribes sought at that hour to lay hands on him; (and they dreaded the people;) for they knew that he had spoken this parable against them.

Matthew XXI. 33. *Hear another parable.* The words of Luke are somewhat different; for he says that Christ *spoke to the people*, while here the discourse is addressed to the priests and scribes. But the solution is easy; for, though Christ *spoke against them*, he exposed their baseness in the presence of all the people. *Mark* says that Christ *began to speak by parables*, but leaves out what was first in order, as also in other passages he gives only a part of the whole. The substance of this parable is, that it is no new thing, if the priests and the other rulers of the Church wickedly endeavour to defraud God of his right; for long ago they practised the same kind of robbery towards the prophets, and now they are ready to *slay his Son;* but they will not go unpunished, for God will arise to defend his right. The object is two-fold; first, to reproach the priests with base and wicked ingratitude; and, secondly, to remove the offence which would be occasioned by his approaching death. For, by means of a false title, they had gained such influence over simple persons and the ignorant multitude, that the religion of the Jews depended on their will and decision. Christ therefore forewarns the weak, and shows that, as so many prophets, one after another, had formerly been slain by the priests, no one ought to be distressed, if a similar instance were exhibited in his own person. But let us now examine it in detail.

A man planted a vineyard. This comparison frequently occurs in Scripture. With respect to the present passage, Christ only means that, while God appoints pastors over his

[1] "Devant nos yeux;"—"before our eyes."

Church, he does not convey his right to others, but acts in the same manner as if a *proprietor* were to *let* a *vineyard* or *field* to a *husbandman*, who would labour in the cultivation of it, and make an annual return. As he complains by Isaiah (v. 4) and Jeremiah, (ii. 21,) that he had received no fruit from the *vine* on the cultivation of which he had bestowed so much labour and expense; so in this passage he accuses the vine-dressers themselves, who, like base swindlers, appropriate to themselves the produce of the *vineyard*. Christ says that the *vineyard* was well furnished, and in excellent condition, when the *husbandmen* received it from the hands of the *proprietor*. By this statement he presents no slight aggravation of their crime; for the more generously he had acted toward them, the more detestable was their ingratitude. Paul employs the same argument, when he wishes to exhort pastors to be diligent in the discharge of their duty, that they are stewards, chosen to govern the house of God, which is the *pillar and ground of truth*, (1 Tim. iii. 16.) And properly; for the more honourable and illustrious their condition is, they lie under so much the deeper obligations to God, not to be indolent in their work. So much the more detestable (as we have already said) is the baseness of those who pour contempt on the great kindness of God, and on the great honour which they have already received from Him.

God *planted a vineyard*,[1] when, remembering his gratuitous adoption, he brought the people out of Egypt, separated them anew to be his inheritance, and called them to the hope of eternal salvation, promising to be their God and Father; for this is the *planting* of which Isaiah speaks, (lx. 21; lxi. 3.) By the *wine-press* and the *tower* are meant the aids which were added for strengthening the faith of the people in the doctrine of the Law, such as, sacrifices and other ritual observances; for God, like a careful and provident head of a family, has left no means untried for granting to his Church all necessary protection.

And let it to husbandmen. God might indeed of himself, without the agency of men, preserve his Church in good

[1] "Son vigne;"—"His vineyard."

order; but he takes men for his ministers, and makes use of their hands. Thus, of old, he appointed priests to be, as it were, cultivators of the *vineyard.* But the wonder is, that Christ compares the prophets to servants, who are sent, after the vintage, to demand the fruit;[1] for we know that they too were *vine-dressers*, and that they held a charge in common with the priests. I reply, it was not necessary for Christ to be careful or exact in describing the resemblance or contrariety between those two orders. The priests were certainly appointed at first on the condition of thoroughly cultivating the Church by sound doctrine; but as they neglected the work assigned them, either through carelessness or ignorance, the prophets were sent as an extraordinary supply, to clear the vine from weeds, to lop off the superfluous wood, and in other ways to make up for the neglect of the priests; and, at the same time, severely to reprove the people, to raise up decayed piety, to awaken drowsy souls, and to bring back the worship of God and a new life. And what else was this than to demand the revenue which was due to God from his vineyard? All this Christ applies justly and truly to his purpose; for the regular and permanent government of his Church was not in the hands of the prophets, but was always held by the priests; just as if a lazy *husbandman*, while he neglected cultivation, claimed the place to which he had been once appointed, under the plea of possession.

35. *And wounded one, and killed another.* Here *Mark* and *Luke* differ a little from *Matthew;* for while *Matthew* mentions many servants, all of whom were ill-treated and insulted, and says that *afterwards other servants were sent more numerous than the first*, *Mark* and *Luke* mention but one at a time, as if the *servants* had been sent, not two or three together, but one after another. But though all the three Evangelists have the same object in view, namely, to show that the Jews will dare to act towards the Son in the same manner as they have repeatedly done towards the prophets,

[1] "Le fruit de la vigne;"—"the fruit of the vine."

Matthew explains the matter more at large, namely, that God, by sending a multitude of prophets, contended with the malice of the priests.[1] Hence it appears how obstinate their malice was, for the correction of which no remedies were of any avail.[2]

37. *They will reverence my son.* Strictly speaking, indeed, this thought does not apply to God; for He knew what would happen, and was not deceived by the expectation of a more agreeable result; but it is customary,[3] especially in parables, to ascribe to Him human feelings. And yet this was not added without reason; for Christ intended to represent, as in a mirror, how deplorable their impiety was, of which it was too certain a proof, that they rose in diabolical rage against the Son of God, who had come to bring them back to a sound mind.[4] As they had formerly, as far as lay in their power, driven God from his inheritance by the cruel murder of the prophets, so it was the crowning point of all their crimes to *slay the Son*, that they might reign, as in a house which wanted an heir. Certainly the chief reason why the priests raged against Christ was, that they might not lose their tyranny, which might be said to be their prey;[5] for he it is by whom God chooses to govern, and to whom He has given all authority.

The Evangelists differ also a little in the conclusion. For *Matthew* relates that he drew from them the confession, by which they condemned themselves; while *Mark* says simply

[1] "Que Dieu ne s'est point lassé pour la cruauté des sacrificateurs, d'envoyer des prophetes; mais les suscitant comme par troupes, a combatu contre leur malice;"—"That God did not, on account of the cruelty of the priests, fail to send prophets; but raising them up—as it were—in troops, fought against their malice."

[2] "Veu que tous les moyens et remedes que Dieu y a employez n'ont rien servi;"—"since all the means and remedies which God employed for it were of no avail."

[3] "C'est la coustume de l'Escriture;"—"it is the custom of Scripture."

[4] "Qui estoit venu pour les retirer de leurs meschantes façons de faire;"—"who had come to withdraw them from their wicked courses of life."

[5] "Pource qu'ils avoyent peur de perdre la proye; c'est a dire, de diminuer quelque chose de leur tyrannie;"—"because they were afraid of losing the prey; that is to say, of diminishing something of their tyranny."

that Christ declared what punishment must await *servants* so unprincipled and wicked. *Luke* differs, at first sight, more openly, by saying that they turned away with horror from the punishment which Christ had threatened. But if we examine the meaning more closely, there is no contradiction; for, in regard to the punishment which such servants deserved, there can be no doubt that they agreed with Christ, but when they perceived that both the crime and the punishment were made to apply to themselves, they deprecated that application.

42. *Have you never read in the Scriptures?* We must remember what we said a little before, that, as *the priests and scribes* kept the people devoted to them, it was a principle current among them, that they alone were competent to judge and decide as to the future redemption, so that no one ought to be received as Messiah, unless he were approved and sanctioned by their voice. They therefore maintain that what Christ had said is impossible, that they would *slay* the *son* and *heir* of *the proprietor of the vineyard.* But Christ confirms his statement by the testimony of Scripture, and the interrogation is emphatic, as if he had said, "You reckon it highly absurd to say that it is possible for the *vine-dressers* to conspire wickedly against the Son of God. But what then? Did the Scripture (Psalm cxviii. 22) foretell that he would be received with joy, and favour, and applause; or did it not, on the contrary, foretell that the rulers themselves would oppose him?"

The passage which he quotes is taken from the same psalm from which had been taken that joyful exclamation,[1] *Save,*[2] *O Lord. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* That it is a prediction of the reign of the Messiah is evident from this consideration, that David was appointed by God to be king, on the condition that his throne would remain for

[1] "Ceste priere de louange;"—"that prayer of praise."

[2] Our author alludes to the word *Hosanna,* (ὡσαννὰ,) which he had explained (*Harmony,* vol. i. p. 452) to be formed, by a slight alteration of the sound, from a Hebrew phrase used in the cxviii. Psalm, *Hoshiana,* (הושיע נא,) *Save now, we beseech thee.—Ed.*

ever, so long as the sun and moon would shine in heaven, and that, when decayed, it would again be restored by the favour of God to its former prosperity. Since, therefore, that psalm contains a description of the reign of David, there is also added the perpetuity of it, on which the restoration depends. If the discourse had related to any temporal reign, Christ would have acted improperly in applying it to himself. But we must also observe what sort of reign God raised up in the person of David. It was that which He would establish in the true Messiah to the end of the world; for that ancient anointing was but a shadow. Hence we infer that what was done in the person of David was a prelude and figure of Christ.

Let us now return to the words of the psalm. The scribes and priests reckoned it incredible that Christ should be rejected[1] by the rulers of the Church. But he proves from the psalm, that he would be placed on his throne by the wonderful power of God, contrary to the will of men, and that this had already been shadowed out in David, whom, though rejected by the nobles, God took to give an instance and proof of what he would at length do in his Christ. The prophet takes the metaphor from buildings; for, since the Church is God's sanctuary, Christ, on whom it is founded, is justly called the *corner-stone;* that is, the *stone* which supports the whole weight of the building. If one were to examine minutely every thing that relates to Christ, the comparison would not apply in every part; but it is perfectly appropriate, for on him the salvation of the Church rests, and by him its condition is preserved. And therefore the other prophets followed the same form of expression, particularly Isaiah and Daniel. But Isaiah makes the closest allusion to this passage, when he represents God as thus speaking, *Lo, I lay in Zion a foundation-stone, a precious and elect stone, against which both houses of Israel shall stumble!* (Isa. xxviii. 16.) The same mode of expression frequently occurs in the New Testament.

The amount of it therefore is, that the kingdom of God will be founded on *a stone,* which *the builders* themselves will

1 "Ne pouvoient croire que Christ peust estre rejetté;"—"could not believe that Christ could be rejected."

reject as unsuitable and useless; and the meaning is, that the Messiah, who is the foundation of the safety of the Church, will not be chosen by the ordinary suffrages of men, but that, when God shall miraculously raise him up by a secret and unknown power, the rulers, to whom has been committed the care of the *building*, will oppose and persecute him. There are two things here which we ought to consider. First, that we may not be perplexed by the wicked attempts of men, who rise up to hinder the reign of Christ, God has warned us beforehand that this will happen. Secondly, whatever may be the contrivances of men, God has at the same time declared, that in setting up the kingdom of Christ, His power will be victorious. Both ought to be carefully observed by us. It appears to be monstrous that the Author of salvation should be rejected, not by strangers, but by those who belonged to his own household,—not by the ignorant multitude, but by the rulers themselves, who hold the government of the Church. Against such strange madness of men our faith ought to be fortified, that it may not give way through the novelty of the occurrence. We now perceive how useful that prediction is, which relieves godly minds from the terror that would otherwise be produced by the mournful spectacle. For nothing is more unreasonable than that the members should rise up against the head, the *vine-dressers* against the *proprietor*, the counsellors against their king, and that *the builders* should *reject* the foundation of the building.

That stone is made the head of the corner. Still more emphatic is this clause, in which God declares that the wicked, by rejecting Christ, will avail nothing, but that his rank will remain unimpaired. The design of it is, that believers, relying on that promise, may safely look down with contempt and derision on the wicked pride of men; for when they have made all their contrivances, Christ will still, in opposition to their wishes, retain the place which the Father has appointed to him. How fiercely soever he may be assailed by those who appear to possess honour and dignity, he will nevertheless remain in his own rank, and will abate nothing on account of their wicked contempt. In short, the

authority of God will prevail, that he may be the *elect* and *precious stone*, which supports the Church of God, his kingdom and temple. The *stone* is said to be made *the head of the corner*, not that he is only a part of the building, (since it is evident from other passages that the Church is entirely founded on Him alone,) but the prophet merely intended to state that he will be the chief support of the building. Some go into ingenious arguments about the word *corner*, that Christ is placed in *the corner*, because he unites two separate walls, the Gentiles and Jews. But in my opinion, David meant nothing more than that *the corner-stone* supports the chief weight of the building.

It may now be asked, How does the Spirit call those men *builders*, who are so strongly bent on the ruin and destruction of the temple of God? For Paul boasts of having been an honest *builder*, because he founded the Church on Christ alone, (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) The answer is easy. Though they are unfaithful in the execution of the office committed to them, yet he gives them this title with respect to their calling. Thus the name *prophet* is often given to deceivers, and those who devour the flock like wolves are called *pastors*. And so far is this from conferring honour on them, that it renders them detestable, when they utterly overthrow the temple of God, which they were appointed to *build*. Hence we draw a useful warning, that the lawful calling does not prevent those who ought to have been the ministers of Christ from being sometimes his base and wicked enemies. The legal priesthood had certainly been appointed by God, and the Lord had bestowed on the Levites permission to govern the Church. Did they therefore discharge their office faithfully? or ought the godly to have obeyed them by renouncing Christ?

Let the Pope now go with his mitred bishops, and let them boast that they ought to be believed in all things, because they occupy the place of pastors. Even granting that they were lawfully called to the government of the Church, yet they have no right to claim any thing more than to hold the title of prelates of the Church. But even the title of calling does not belong to them; for, in order to raise them to that tyranny, it would be necessary that the whole

order of the Church should be overturned. And even though they might justly claim ordinary jurisdiction, yet, if they overturn the sacred house of God, it is only in name that they must be reckoned *builders*. Nor does it always happen that Christ is rejected by those who are entrusted with the government of the Church; for not only were there many godly priests under the Law, but also, under the reign of Christ, there are some pastors who labour diligently and honestly in *building* the Church; but as it was necessary that this prediction should be fulfilled, that *the builders* should *reject the stone*, wisdom must be exercised in distinguishing between them. And the Holy Spirit has expressly warned us, that none may be mistaken as to an empty title or the dignity of calling.

This has been done by the Lord. As it is a matter too far removed from the ordinary judgment of men, that the pastors of the Church should themselves *reject* the Son of God from being their Prince, the prophet refers it to the secret purpose of God, which, though we cannot comprehend it by our senses, we ought to contemplate and admire. Let us therefore understand, that this cuts short every question, and that every man is expressly forbidden to judge and measure the nature of Christ's kingdom by the reason of the flesh; for what folly is it to wish to subject to the capacity of our mind a miracle which the prophet exhorts us to adore? Will you then receive nothing but what appears to yourself to be probable, in reference to the kingdom of Christ, the commencement of which the Holy Spirit declares to be a mystery worthy of the highest admiration, because it is concealed from the eyes of men? So then, whenever the question relates to the origin, restoration, condition, and the whole safety of the Church, we must not consult our senses,[1] but must honour the power of God by admiring his hidden work.[2] There is also an implied contrast between God and men; for not only are we commanded to embrace the wonderful method

[1] "Qu'il nous souviene de ne nous arrester point a ce que nos sens peuvent comprendre;"—"let us remember not to stop at what our senses can comprehend."

[2] "Son œuvre incomprehensible;"—"his incomprehensible work."

of governing the Church, because it is the work of God, but we are likewise withdrawn from a foolish reverence for men, which frequently obscures the glory of God; as if the prophet had said, that however magnificent may be the titles which men bear, it is wicked in any man to oppose them to God.

This furnishes a refutation of the diabolical wickedness of the Papists, who do not scruple to prefer to the word of God a decision of their pretended Church. For on what does the authority of the word of God depend, according to them, but on the opinion of men, so that no more power is left to God than what the Church is pleased to allow him? Far otherwise does the Spirit instruct us by this passage, namely, that as soon as the majesty of God[1] appears, the whole world ought to be silent.

43. *Therefore I say to you.* Hitherto Christ directed his discourse to rulers and governors, but in presence of the people. Now, however, he addresses in the same manner the people themselves, and not without reason, for they had been the companions and assistants of the priests and scribes in hindering the grace of God. It was from the priests, no doubt, that the evil arose, but the people had already deserved, on account of their sins, to have such corrupt and degenerate pastors. Besides, the whole body was infected, as it were, by a similar malice to resist God. This is the reason why Christ denounces against all indiscriminately the dreadful vengeance of God; for as the priests were inflated with the desire of holding the highest power, so the rest of the people gloried on the ground of having been adopted. Christ now declares that God was not bound to them, and, therefore, that he will convey to another the honour of which they rendered themselves unworthy. And this, no doubt, was once spoken to them, but was written for the sake of all of us, that, if God choose us to be His people, we may not grow wanton through a vain and wicked confidence in the flesh, but may endeavour, on our part, to perform the duties which he enjoins on his children;

[1] "La majesté du Fils de Dieu;"—"the majesty of the Son of God."

for if he spared not the natural branches, (Rom. xi. 21,) what will he do with those which were ingrafted? The Jews thought that the kingdom of God dwelt among them by hereditary right, and therefore they adhered obstinately to their vices. We have unexpectedly come into their room contrary to nature, and therefore much less is the kingdom of God bound to us, if it be not rooted in true godliness.

Now as our minds ought to be struck with terror by the threatening of Christ, that those who have profaned the kingdom of God will be deprived of it, so the perpetuity of that kingdom, which is here described, may afford comfort to all the godly. For by these words Christ assures us that, though the ungodly destroyed the worship of God among themselves, they would never cause the name of Christ to be abolished, or true religion to perish; for God, in whose hand are all the ends of the earth, will find elsewhere a dwelling and habitation for his kingdom. We ought also to learn from this passage, that the Gospel is not preached in order that it may lie barren and inoperative, but that it may yield fruit.

44. *And he who shall fall on this stone.* Christ confirms more fully the former statement, that he suffers no loss or diminution when he is rejected by the wicked, because, though their obstinacy were like a stone or like iron, yet by his own hardness he will break them, and therefore he will be the more highly glorified in their destruction. He perceived in the Jews an astonishing obstinacy, and therefore it was necessary that this kind of punishment should be described to them in an alarming manner, that they might not flatter themselves, while they thus dashed against him. This doctrine partly instructs us to give ourselves up gently, with a mild and tractable heart, to the dominion of Christ, and partly fortifies us against the obstinacy and furious attacks of the wicked, for whom there awaits a dreadful end.

Those persons are said to *fall upon* Christ, who rush forward to destroy him; not that they occupy a more elevated position than he does, but because their madness carries them so far, that they endeavour to attack Christ as if he were

below them. But Christ tells them that all that they will gain by it is, that by the very conflict they will be *broken*. But when they have thus proudly exalted themselves, he tells them that another thing will happen, which is, that they will be *bruised* under the *stone*, against which they so insolently dashed themselves.

45. *They knew that he spoke of them.* The Evangelists show how little success Christ had, that we may not wonder if the doctrine of the Gospel does not bring all men, in the present day, to yield obedience to God. Let us also learn that it is impossible but that the rage of ungodly men will be more and more inflamed by threatenings; for as God seals his word on our hearts, so also it is a hot iron to wound bad consciences, in consequence of which their ungodliness is the more inflamed. We ought therefore to pray that he would subdue us to voluntary fear, lest the mere knowledge of his vengeance should exasperate us the more. When they are restrained solely by the dread of the people from laying their hands on Christ, let us learn that God had laid a bridle on them; from which also arises a very delightful consolation to believers, when they learn that God protects them, and constantly enables them to escape from the jaws of death.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXII. 15. Then the Pharisees went away, and took counsel how they might entrap him in his words. 16. And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men. 17. Tell us then, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to	XII. 13. And they send to him certain Pharisees and Herodians, to entrap him in his words. 14. And they, when they came, said to him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not? Shall	XX. 20. And they watched him, and sent spies, who would pretend to be righteous men, to entrap him in his words, and to deliver him to the authority and power of the governor. 21. And they put a question to him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest uprightly, and regardest not a person,[1] but teachest the way of God in truth. 22. Is

[1] "Et n'es point accepteur de personnes;"—"and art not an accepter of persons."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
give tribute to Cesar or not? 18. But Jesus, perceiving their wickedness, saith, Why do you tempt me, hypocrites? 19. Show me the tribute-money. And they presented to him a denarius. 20. And he saith to them, Whose is this image and inscription? 21. They say to him, Cesar's. Then said he to them, Render therefore to Cesar the things which are Cesar's, and to God the things which are God's. 22. And having heard these things, they wondered, and left him, and went away.	we give, or shall we not give? 15. But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, Why do you tempt me? Bring me a denarius, that I may see it. 16. And they brought it; and he saith to them, Whose is this image and inscription? And they said to him, Cesar's. 17. And Jesus answering said to them, Render to Cesar those things which are Cesar's, and to God those things which are God's.[1] And they wondered at him.[2]	it lawful for us to give tribute to Cesar, or not? 23. And having perceived their craftiness, he said to them, Why do you tempt me? 24. Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription hath it? They answering said, Cesar's. 25. And he said to them, Render therefore to Cesar those things which are Cesar's, and to God those things which are God's. 26. And they could not find fault with his words in presence of the people; and wondering at his reply, they were silent.

Matthew XXII. 15. *That they might entrap him in his words. The Pharisees*, perceiving that all their other attempts against Christ had been fruitless, at length concluded that the best and most expeditious method of destroying him was, *to deliver him to the governor*, as a seditious person and a disturber of the peace. There was at that time, as we have seen under another passage,[3] great disputing among the Jews about the *tribute-money;* for, since the Romans had claimed for themselves the *tribute-money*, which God commanded to be paid to Himself under the Law of Moses, (Exod. xxx. 13,) the Jews everywhere complained that it was a shameful and intolerable crime for profane men to lay claim, in this manner, to a divine prerogative; besides that, as this payment of tribute, which was enjoined on them by the Law, was a testimony of their adoption, they looked upon themselves as deprived of an honour to which they had a just claim. Now

[1] "Rendez à Cesar ce qui est à Cesar, et à Dieu ce qui est à Dieu;"—"render to Cesar what is Cesar's, and to God what is God's."

[2] "Et furent esmerveillez de luy;"—"and they were astonished at him."

[3] *Harmony*, vol. ii. p. 368.

the deeper any man's poverty was,[1] the bolder did it render him to raise sedition.

This trick of taking Christ by surprise is therefore continued by *the Pharisees*, that, in whatever way he reply as to *the tribute-money*, they may lay snares for him. If he affirm that they ought not to pay, he will be convicted of sedition. If, on the contrary, he acknowledge it to be justly due, he will be held to be an enemy of his nation, and a betrayer of the liberty of his country. Their principal object is, to lead the people to dislike him. This is the *entrapping* to which the Evangelists refer; for they suppose that Christ is surrounded on all sides by *nets*, so that he can no longer escape. Having avowed themselves to be his enemies, and knowing that they would, on that account, be suspected, they put forward—as Matthew states—*some of their disciples*. Luke, again, calls them *spies, who pretended to be righteous men;* that is, persons who deceitfully professed an honest and proper desire to learn: for *the pretence of righteousness* is not here used in a general sense, but is limited to the present occasion, because they would not have been received, had they not made a pretence of docility and of genuine zeal.

With the Herodians. They take along with them *the Herodians*, because they were more favourable to the Roman government, and therefore would be more disposed to raise an accusation. It is worthy of attention that, though those sects had fierce contentions with each other, so bitter was their hatred against Christ, that they conspired to destroy him. What the sect of *the Herodians* was, we have formerly explained;[2] for, Herod being only half a Jew, or a spurious and corrupt professor of the Law, those who desired that the Law should be kept with exactness and in every part, condemned him and his impure worship; but he had his flatterers, who gave plausible excuses for his false doctrine. In addition to the other sects, therefore, there sprung up at that time a religion of the Court.

[1] "Selon qu'un chacun estoit plus poure, et n'avoit rien à perdre;"—"according as any man was poorer, and had nothing to lose."

[2] *Harmony*, vol. ii. p. 282.

16. *Master, we know that thou art true.* This is the *righteousness* which they counterfeit, when they offer humble subjection to Christ, as if they were desirous to learn, and as if they not only had some relish for piety, but also were fully convinced of his doctrine; for if what they said had been from the heart, this would have been true uprightness. And therefore from their words we may obtain a definition of a good and faithful teacher, such as they pretended to believe Christ to be. They say that he is *true, and teaches the way of God;* that is, he is a faithful interpreter of God, and that he teaches it *in truth;* that is, without any corruption. *The way of God* is contrasted with the inventions of men, and with all foreign doctrines; and *truth* is contrasted with ambition, covetousness, and other wicked dispositions, which usually corrupt the purity of instruction. So then he ought to be reckoned a *true teacher*, who does not introduce the contrivances of men, or depart from the pure word of God, but gives out, as it were, with his hands what he has learned from the mouth of God, and who, from a sincere desire of edification, accommodates his doctrine to the advantage and salvation of the people, and does not debase it by any disguise. As to this latter clause, when Paul asserts that he *does not* MAKE MERCHANDISE *of the word of God*, (2 Cor. ii. 17,) he means that there are some persons who use dexterity, and do not openly overturn sound doctrine, or incur the disgrace of holding wicked opinions, but who disguise and corrupt the purity of doctrine, because they are ambitious, or covetous, or easily turned in various directions according to their earnest desire. He therefore compares them to *jockeys*, (κυπηλλεύοντες,) because they deprave the pure use of the word of God.

For thou regardest not the person of men. It is also worthy of attention, that those hypocrites likewise add, that Christ teaches rightly, *because he has no regard for the person of men.* Nothing has a more powerful tendency to withdraw teachers from a faithful and upright dispensation of the word than to pay *respect* to men; for it is impossible that any one who *desires to please men* (Gal. i. 10) should truly devote himself

to God. Some attention, no doubt, is due to men, but not so as to obtain their favour by flattery. In short, in order to walk uprightly, we must necessarily put away *respect of persons*, which *obscures the light and perverts right judgment*, as God frequently inculcates in the Law, (Deut. i. 16; xvi. 19,) and as experience also points out. Thus Christ (John vii. 24) contrasts *acceptance of persons* (προσωποληψίαν) and *sound judgment* as things totally different.

18. *Knowing their malice.* They had opened the conversation in such a manner that they did not appear to differ at all from excellent scholars. Whence then had Christ this knowledge, but because his Spirit was a discerner of hearts? It was not by human conjecture that he perceived their cunning, but because he was God he penetrated into their hearts, and therefore they gained nothing by attempting the concealment of flattery and of *pretended righteousness.* Accordingly, before giving a reply, he exhibited a proof of his Divinity by laying open their concealed malice. Now since wicked men every day employ snares of the same kind, while their inward malice is concealed from us, we ought to pray to Christ to bestow upon us the spirit of discernment, and that what he had by nature and by his own right he may grant to us by a free gift. How much we need this prudence, is evident from the consideration that, if we do not guard against the snares of the wicked, we shall constantly expose the doctrine of God to their calumnies.

19. *Show me the tribute-money.* When Christ orders them to bring forward a coin, though at first sight it appears to be of no great importance, yet it is sufficient for breaking their snares. In this way they had already made an acknowledgment of subjection, so that Christ did not find it necessary to enjoin upon them any thing new. The coin was stamped with *Cesar's likeness;* and thus the authority of the Roman government had been approved and admitted by the general practice. Hence it was evident that the Jews themselves had voluntarily come under obligation to pay tribute, for

they had given up to the Romans the power of the sword ;[1] and there was no propriety in making a separate dispute about *the tribute-money*, for that question depended on the general arrangements of the government.

21. *Render therefore to Cesar those things which are Cesar's.* Christ reminds them that, as the subjection of their nation was attested by the coin, there ought to be no debate on that subject ; as if he had said, "If you think it strange to pay *tribute*, be not subjects of the Roman Empire. But the money (which men employ as the pledge of mutual exchanges) attests that *Cesar* rules over you ; so that, by your own silent consent, the liberty to which you lay claim is lost and gone." Christ's reply does not leave the matter open, but contains full instruction on the question which had been proposed. It lays down a clear distinction between spiritual and civil government, in order to inform us that outward subjection does not prevent us from having within us a conscience free in the sight of God. For Christ intended to refute the error of those who did not think that they would be the people of God, unless they were free from every yoke of human authority. In like manner, Paul earnestly insists on this point, that they ought not the less to look upon themselves as serving God alone, if they obey human laws, if they *pay tribute*, and bend the neck to bear other burdens, (Rom. xiii. 7.) In short, Christ declares that it is no violation of the authority of God, or any injury done to his service, if, in respect of outward government, the Jews obey the Romans.

He appears also to glance at their hypocrisy, because, while they carelessly permitted the service of God to be corrupted in many respects, and even wickedly deprived God of his authority, they displayed such ardent zeal about a matter of no importance ; as if he had said, "You are exceedingly afraid, lest, if tribute be paid to the Romans, the honour of God may be infringed ; but you ought rather to take care to yield to God that service which he demands from

[1] "Pource qu'ils avoyent laissé usurper aux Romains la souveraine puissance ;"—"because they had allowed the Romans to usurp the supreme power."

you, and, at the same time, to render to men what is their due." We might be apt to think, no doubt, that the distinction does not apply; for, strictly speaking, when we perform our duty towards men, we thereby render obedience to God. But Christ, accommodating his discourse to the common people, reckoned it enough to draw a distinction between the spiritual kingdom of God, on the one hand, and political order and the condition of the present life, on the other. We must therefore attend to this distinction, that, while the Lord wishes to be the only Lawgiver for governing souls, the rule for worshipping Him must not be sought from any other source than from His own word, and that we ought to abide by the only and pure worship which is there enjoined; but that the power of the sword, the laws, and the decisions of tribunals, do not hinder the worship of God from remaining entire amongst us.

But this doctrine extends still farther, that every man, according to his calling, ought to perform the duty which he owes to men; that children ought willingly to submit to their parents, and servants to their masters; that they ought to be courteous and obliging towards each other, according to the law of charity, provided that God always retain the highest authority, to which every thing that can be due to men is, as we say, subordinate.[1] The amount of it therefore is, that those who destroy political order are rebellious against God, and therefore, that obedience to princes and magistrates is always joined to the worship and fear of God; but that, on the other hand, if princes claim any part of the authority of God, we ought not to obey them any farther than can be done without offending God.

22. *They wondered at him.* Here, too, it appears how God turns to a different purpose the wicked attempts of His enemies, and not only disappoints their expectation, but even drives them back with disgrace. It will sometimes happen, no doubt, that wicked men, though vanquished, do not cease to growl; but, though their insolence be not subdued, how-

[1] "Est subalterne, comme on dit; c'est à dire, en depend;"—"is subordinate, as we say; that is, depends upon it."

ever numerous may be their assaults on the Word of God, there is an equal number of victories which God has in his hand, to triumph over them and Satan their head. But in this reply, Christ intended to give a peculiar display of his glory, by compelling those men to depart crowned with shame.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXII. 23. The same day came to him the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, and interrogated him, 24. Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, not having a child,[1] his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. 25. Now there were amongst us seven brothers, and the first, having married a wife, died, and, having no seed, left his wife to his brother. 26. In like manner, the second, and the third, till the seventh. 27. And last of all the woman died also. 28. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29. And Jesus answering said to them, You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. 30. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God	XII. 18. And the Sadducees come to him, who say that there is no resurrection; and they interrogated him, saying, 19. Master, Moses wrote to us, that, if any man's brother die, and leave a wife, and do not leave children, his brother shall take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. 20. There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and he, dying, left no seed. 21. And the second took her, and died, and neither did he leave any seed; and the third likewise. 22. And the seven took her, and did not leave seed. And last of all the wife died also. 23. In the resurrection, therefore, when they shall rise again, whose wife of them shall she be? for the seven had her for a wife. 24. And Jesus answering said to them, Is it not the reason why you err, that you do not know the Scriptures, nor the power of God? 25. For when they shall rise again from the dead, they neither	XX. 27. And some of the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, came, and interrogated him, 28. Saying, Master, Moses wrote to us, that if any man's brother die having a wife, and he die without children, his brother shall take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. 29. Now there were seven brothers, and the first took a wife, and died without children. 30. And the second took her, and also died without children. 31. And the third took her, and in like manner all the seven, and left no children, and died. 32. Last of all the woman also died. 33. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of them shall she be? for the seven had her for a wife. 34. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage. 35. But they who shall be counted worthy of that world,[2] and of the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36. For they cannot die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God,

[1] "Sans avoir enfans;"—"without having children."
[2] "Dignes d'obtenir ce siecle-là;"—"worthy to obtain that world."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
in heaven. 31. But as to the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32. I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. 33. And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his doctrine.	marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God who are in heaven. 26. But as to the dead, that they rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, how God spoke to him in the bush, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? 27. God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; therefore you greatly err.	being the children of the resurrection. 37. But that the dead rise again, even Moses showed at the bush, when he says that the Lord is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38. But he is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him. 39. And some of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast spoken well. 40. And they did not venture to put any more questions to him.

Matthew XXII. 23. *The same day came to him the Sadducees.* We see here how Satan brings together all the ungodly, who in other respects differ widely from each other, to attack the truth of God. For, though a deadly strife existed between these two sects,[1] yet they conspire together against Christ; so that the Pharisees are not displeased to have their own doctrine attacked in the person of Christ. Thus in the present day, we see all the forces of Satan, though in other respects they are opposed to each other, rising on every hand against Christ. And so fierce is the hatred with which the Papists burn against the Gospel, that they willingly support Epicureans, Libertines, and other monsters of that description, provided that they can avail themselves of their aid for accomplishing its destruction. In short, we see that they come out of various camps to make an attack on Christ; and that this was done, because all of them alike hated the light of sound doctrine. Now *the Sadducees* propose a question to Christ, that by the appearance of absurdity they may either lead him to take part in their error, or, if he disagree with them, that they may hold him up to disgrace and ridicule among an uneducated and ignorant

[1] "Combien que ces deux sectes se fissent tous les jours la guerre l'un contre l'autre;"—"though those two sects were every day making war against each other."

multitude. It is no doubt possible, that they had been formerly accustomed to employ this sophistry for harassing the Pharisees, but now they attempt to take Christ in the same snare.

Who say that there is no resurrection. How the sect of *the Sadducees* originated we have explained under another passage. *Luke* assures us that they denied not only the final *resurrection* of the body, but also the immortality of the soul, (Acts xxiii. 8.) And, indeed, if we consider properly the doctrine of Scripture, the life of the soul, apart from the hope of the *resurrection*, will be a mere dream; for God does not declare that, immediately after the death of the body, souls live,—as if their glory and happiness were already enjoyed by them in perfection,—but delays the expectation of them till the last day. I readily acknowledge that the philosophers, who were ignorant of the *resurrection* of the body, have many discussions about the immortal essence of the soul; but they talk so foolishly about the state of the future life that their opinions have no weight. But since the Scriptures inform us that the spiritual life depends on the hope of the *resurrection*, and that souls, when separated from the bodies, look forward to it, whoever destroys the *resurrection* deprives souls also of their immortality.

Now this enables us to perceive the dreadful confusion of the Jewish Church, that their rulers[1] in religious matters took away the expectation of a future life, so that, after the death of the body, men differed in no respect from brute beasts. They did not indeed deny that our lives ought to be holy and righteous, and were not so profane as to consider the worship of God to be superfluous; on the contrary, they maintained that God is the Judge of the world, and that the affairs of men are directed by His providence. But as the reward of the godly, and likewise the punishment due to the wicked, were limited by them to the present life, even though there had been truth in their assertion, that

[1] "Une partie des principaux chefs de la religion;"—"a part of the chief leaders in religion."

every man is now treated impartially according to his merit,[1] yet it was excessively absurd to restrict the promises of God within such narrow limits. Now experience plainly shows that they were chargeable with the grossest stupidity, since it is manifest that the reward which is laid up for the good is left incomplete till another life, and likewise that the punishment of the wicked is not wholly inflicted in this world.

In short, it is impossible to conceive any thing more absurd than this dream, that men formed after the image of God are extinguished by death like the beasts. But how disgraceful and monstrous was it that while, among the profane and blind idolaters of all nations, some notion, at least, of a future life still lingered, among the Jews, the peculiar people of God, this seed of piety was destroyed. I do not mention that, when they saw that the holy fathers earnestly aspired to the heavenly life, and that the covenant which God had made with them was spiritual and eternal, they must have been worse than stupid who remained blind in the midst of such clear light. But, first, this was the just reward of those who had split the Church of God into sects; and, secondly, in this manner the Lord avenged the wicked contempt of His doctrine.

24. *Master, Moses said.* As it was enough to mention the bare fact, why do they make use of this preface? They cunningly employ the name of *Moses*, for the purpose of proving that they were lawful marriages, which had been contracted not by the will of men, but by the command and appointment of God himself. But that God should contradict Himself is impossible. Their sophistry therefore is this: "If God shall one day collect believers into His kingdom, He will restore whatever He had given to them in the world. What then shall become of the woman, whom God assigned to seven husbands?" Thus all ungodly persons and heretics forge their calumnies, that by means of them they may

[1] "Que Dieu traitte yci un chacun selon qu'il a merité;"—"that God here treats every one according as he has deserved."

disfigure the true doctrine of godliness, and put to shame the servants of Christ. Nay, the Papists are restrained by no shame from openly ridiculing God and his word, when they attempt to take us by surprise. And not without reason, therefore, does Paul enjoin a teacher to be furnished with armour for repelling the adversaries of the truth, (Titus i. 9.) With respect to the law, (Deut. xxv. 5,) by which God commanded the relatives, who were nearest of kin, to succeed the dead in marriage, if the first had died without children, the reason was, that the woman who had married into a particular family should leave offspring in it. But if there had been children by the first marriage, a marriage within the degrees forbidden by the law (Lev. xviii. 16) would have been incestuous.

29. *You err, not knowing the Scriptures.* Though Christ addresses *the Sadducees*, yet this reproof applies generally to all inventors of false doctrines. For, since God makes known His will clearly in *the Scriptures*, the want of acquaintance with them is the source and cause of all errors. But this is no ordinary consolation to the godly, that they will be safe from the danger of *erring*, so long as they humbly, modestly, and submissively inquire from *the Scriptures* what is right and true. As to *the power of God* being connected by Christ with the word, it refers to the present occasion. For, since *the resurrection* far exceeds the capacity of the human senses, it will be incredible to us, till our minds rise to the contemplation of the boundless power of God, *by which*, as Paul tells us, *he is able to subdue all things to himself*, (Philip. iii. 21.) Besides, *the Sadducees* must have been void of understanding, when they committed the error of estimating the glory of the heavenly life according to the present state. In the meantime, we learn that those men form and express just and wise sentiments respecting the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom, who join *the power of God* with *the Scriptures.*

30. *But are like the angels of God in heaven.* He does not mean that the children of God will be, in all respects, *like the angels*, but only so far as they shall be free from every

infirmity of the present life; thus affirming that they will no longer be exposed to the wants of a frail and perishing life. Luke expresses more clearly the nature of the resemblance, that they can no longer die, and therefore there will be no propagation of their species, as on earth. Now he speaks of believers only, for no mention had been made of the wicked.

But a question arises, Why does he say that they will then be *the children of God*, because they will be *children of the resurrection;* since God bestows this honour on those who believe on him, though shut up within the frail prison of the body? And how would we be heirs of eternal life after death, unless God already acknowledged us as children? I reply: As we are ingrafted by faith into the body of Christ, we are adopted by God as his children, and of this *adoption the Spirit is the witness, seal, earnest, and pledge*, so that with this assurance *we may freely cry, Abba, Father*, (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6.) Now though *we know that we are the children of God*, yet *as it doth not yet appear what we shall be*, till, transformed into his glory, *we shall see him as he is*, (1 John iii. 2,) we are not as yet actually reckoned to be his children. And though we are renewed by the Spirit of God, yet as *our life is still hidden*, (Col. iii. 3,) the manifestation of it will truly and perfectly distinguish us from strangers. In this sense our *adoption* is said by Paul to be delayed till the last day, (Rom. viii. 23.)

Luke XX. 37. *But that the dead shall rise.* After having refuted the objection brought against him, Christ confirms, by the testimony of Scripture, the doctrine of the final resurrection. And this is the order which must always be observed. Having repelled the calumnies of the enemies of the truth, we must make them understand that they oppose the word of God; for until they are convicted by the testimony of Scripture, they will always be at liberty to rebel. Christ quotes a passage from Moses, because he was dealing with *the Sadducees*, who had no great faith in the prophets, or who, at least, held them in no higher estimation than we do the Book of Ecclesiasticus, or the History of the Maccabees. Another reason was, that, as they had brought forward

Moses, he chose rather to refer to the same writer than to quote any of the prophets. Besides, he did not aim at collecting all the passages of Scripture, as we see that the apostles do not always make use of the same proofs on the same subject.

And yet we must not imagine that there were no good reasons why Christ seized on this passage (Exod. iii. 6) in preference to others; but he selected it with the best judgment —though it might appear to be somewhat obscure—because it ought to have been well known and distinctly remembered by the Jews, being a declaration that they were redeemed by God, because they were the children of Abraham. There, indeed, God declares that he is *come down to deliver an afflicted people*, but at the same time adds, that he acknowledges that people as his own, in respect of adoption, on account of the covenant which he had made with Abraham. How comes it that God regards *the dead* rather than *the living*, but because he assigns the first rank of honour to the fathers, in whose hands he had placed his covenant? And in what respect would they have the preference, if they had been extinguished by death? This is clearly expressed also by the nature of the relation; for as no man can be a father without children, nor a king without a people, so, strictly speaking, *the Lord* cannot be called *the God* of any but *the living*.

Christ's argument, however, is drawn not so much from the ordinary form of expression as from the promise which is contained in these words. For the Lord offers himself to be our God on the condition of receiving us, on the other hand, as his people, which alone is sufficient for the assurance of perfect happiness. Hence that saying of the Church by the prophet Habakkuk, (i. 12,) *Thou art our God from the beginning: we shall not die*. Since, therefore, the Lord promises salvation to all to whom he declares that he is their God, and since he says this respecting Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it follows that there remains for the dead a hope of life. If it be objected, that souls may continue to exist, though there be no resurrection of the dead, I replied, a little before, that those two are connected, because souls aspire to the inheritance laid up for them, though they do not yet reach that condition.

38. *For all live to him.* This mode of expression is employed in various senses in Scripture; but here it means that believers, after that they have died in this world, lead a heavenly life with God; as Paul says that Christ, after having been admitted to the heavenly glory, *liveth to God*, (Rom. vi. 10,) because he is freed from the infirmities and afflictions of this passing life. But here Christ expressly reminds us, that we must not form a judgment of the life of the godly according to the perceptions of the flesh, because that life is concealed under the secret keeping of God. For if, while they are pilgrims in the world, they bear a close resemblance to dead men, much less does any appearance of life exist in them after the death of the body. But God is faithful to preserve them alive in his presence, beyond the comprehension of men.

39. *And some of the scribes answering.* As it is probable that all of them were actuated by evil dispositions towards him, this confession was extorted, by a secret exercise of divine power, from *some of them*, that is, from the Pharisees. It may be that, though they could have wished that Christ had been disgracefully vanquished and silenced, when they perceived that his reply has fortified them against the opposite sect,[1] ambition led them to congratulate him on having obtained a victory. Perhaps, too, they burned with envy, and did not wish that Christ should be put down by *the Sadducees*.[2] Meanwhile, it was brought about by the wonderful providence of God, that even his most deadly enemies assented to his doctrine. Their insolence, too, was restrained, not only because they saw that Christ was prepared to sustain every kind of attack, but because they feared that they would be driven back with disgrace, which already had frequently occurred; and because they were ashamed of allowing him, by their silence, to carry off the victory, by which his influence over the people would be greatly increased. When

[1] "Contra la secte des Sadduciens, leurs adversaires;"—"against the sect of the Sadducees, their adversaries."

[2] "Que ce fussent les Sadduciens qui emportassant la victoire par dessus Christ;"—"that it should be the Sadducees who carried the victory over Christ."

Matthew says that *all were astonished at his doctrine*, we ought to observe that the doctrine of religion was at that time corrupted by so many wicked or frivolous opinions, that it was justly regarded as a miracle that the hope of the resurrection was so ably and appropriately proved from the Law.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXII. 34. But when the Pharisees heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they assembled together. 35. And one of them, a doctor of the law, put a question to him, tempting him, and saying, 36. Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37. Jesus saith to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38. This is the first and great commandment. 39. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as much as	XII. 28. And when one of the scribes came, and heard them disputing together, and saw that he had answered them well, he put a question to him, Which is the first commandment of all? 29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. 30. And, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. 31. And the second, which is like it, is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: there is no other commandment greater than these. 32. And the scribe said to him, Master, thou hast answered well with truth, that there is one God, and there is no other besides him. 33. And that to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is better than all burnt-offerings and	X. 25. And, lo, a certain lawyer[1] rose up, tempting him, and saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26. And he said to him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27. He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. 28. And he said to him, Thou hast answered right: do this, and thou shalt live. 29. But he wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who even stripped him of his raiment, and, having wounded him, went away, leaving him half-dead. 31. And it happened that a certain priest came down that way, and having seen him, passed by. 32. And in like manner a Levite, going near the place, having approached and seen him, passed by. 33. And a certain Samaritan, on his journey, came to him, and when he saw him, was moved with compassion. 34. And approaching, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and, setting him on his own beast, conducted him to an inn, and took care of him. 35. And, next day, as he was departing, he drew out two denarii, and gave them to the landlord, and said to him, Take care of him, and whatever thou spendest more, when I return, I

[1] "Un docteur de la loy;"—"a doctor of the law."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
thyself. 40. On these two commandments the whole law and the prophets depend.	sacrifices. 34. And Jesus, when he saw that he had replied skilfully, said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And after that, no man ventured to put a question to him.	will repay thee. 36. Which therefore of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him who fell among robbers? 37. And he said, He who took compassion on him. Jesus therefore said to him, Go, and do thou in like manner.

Although I think that this narrative has nothing more than a resemblance to what is related by Matthew in the 22d, and by Mark in the 12th chapter, of his Gospel, and that they are not the same; I have chosen to collect them into one place, because, while Matthew and Mark affirm that this was the last *question* by which our Lord was *tempted*, Luke makes no mention of that circumstance, and seems intentionally to leave it out, because he had stated it in another passage. And yet I do not dispute that it may be the same narrative, though Luke has some things different from the other two. They all agree in this, that the *scribe* put a question for the sake of tempting Christ; but he who is described by Matthew and Mark goes away with no bad disposition; for he acquiesces in Christ's reply, and shows a sign of a teachable and gentle mind: to which must be added, that Christ, on the other hand, declares that *he is not far from the kingdom of God.* Luke, on the other hand, introduces a man who was obstinate and swelled with pride, in whom no evidence of repentance is discovered. Now there would be no absurdity in saying that Christ was repeatedly *tempted* on the subject of true righteousness, and of keeping the Law, and of the rule of a good life. But whether Luke has related this out of its proper place, or whether he has now passed by the other question—because that former narrative relating to doctrine was sufficient—the similarity of the doctrine seemed to require me to compare the three Evangelists with each other.

Let us now see what was the occasion that led this *scribe* to put a question to Christ. It is because, being an expounder of the Law, he is offended at the doctrine of the gospel, by which he supposes the authority of Moses to be

diminished. At the same time, he is not so much influenced by zeal for the Law, as by displeasure at losing some part of the honour of his teaching. He therefore inquires at Christ, if he wishes to profess any thing more perfect than the Law; for, though he does not say this in words, yet his question is ensnaring, for the purpose of exposing Christ to the hatred of the people. Matthew and Mark do not attribute this stratagem to one man only, but show that it was done by mutual arrangement, and that out of the whole sect one person was chosen who was thought to excel the rest in ability and learning. In the form of the question, too, Luke differs somewhat from Matthew and Mark; for, according to him, the *scribe* inquires *what men must do to obtain eternal life*, but according to the other two Evangelists, he inquires *what is the chief commandment in the law*. But the design is the same, for he makes a deceitful attack on Christ, that, if he can draw any thing from his lips that is at variance with *the law*, he may exclaim against him as an apostate and a promoter of ungodly revolt.

Luke X. 26. *What is written in the law?* He receives from Christ a reply different from what he had expected. And, indeed, no other rule of a holy and righteous life was prescribed by Christ than what had been laid down by the Law of Moses; for the perfect love of God and of our neighbours comprehends the utmost perfection of righteousness. Yet it must be observed, that Christ speaks here about obtaining salvation, in agreement with the question which had been put to him; for he does not teach absolutely, as in other passages, how men may arrive at eternal life, but how they ought to live, in order to be accounted righteous in the sight of God. Now it is certain that in the Law there is prescribed to men a rule by which they ought to regulate their life, so as to obtain salvation in the sight of God. That the Law can do nothing else than condemn, and is therefore called the doctrine of death, and is said by Paul to increase transgressions, (Rom. vii. 13,) arises not from any fault of its doctrine, but because it is impossible for us to perform what it enjoins. Therefore, though no man is justified by the Law,

yet the Law itself contains the highest righteousness, because it does not falsely hold out salvation to its followers, if any one fully observed all that it commands.[1] Nor ought we to look upon this as a strange manner of teaching, that God first demands the righteousness of works, and next offers a gratuitous righteousness without works; for it is necessary that men should be convinced of their righteous condemnation, that they may betake themselves to the mercy of God. Accordingly, Paul (Rom. x. 5, 6) compares both kinds of *righteousness*, in order to inform us that the reason why we are freely justified by God is, that we have no righteousness of our own. Now Christ in this reply accommodated himself to the *lawyer*, and attended to the nature of his *question;* for he had inquired not how salvation must be sought, but by what works it must be obtained.

Matthew XXII. 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* According to Mark, the preface is inserted, that *Jehovah alone is the God of Israel;* by which words God supports the authority of his law in two ways. For, first, it ought to be a powerful excitement to the worship of God, when we are fully convinced that we worship the actual Creator of heaven and earth, because indifference is naturally produced by doubt; and, secondly, because it is a pleasing inducement to *love* him, when he freely adopts us as his people. So then, that they may not hesitate, as usually happens in cases of uncertainty, the Jews are informed that the rule of life is prescribed to them by the true and only God; and, on the other hand, that they may not be kept back by distrust, God approaches to them in a familiar manner, and reminds them of his gracious covenant with them. And yet there is no reason to doubt that the Lord distinguishes himself from all idols, that the Jews may not be drawn aside from him, but may adhere to the pure worship of God himself. Now if uncertainty does not keep back the wretched worshippers of idols from being carried away to the love of them by im-

[1] "S'il s'en trouvoit quelqu'un qui observast entierement ce qu'elle commande;"—"if any one were found who observed entirely what it commands."

petuous zeal, what excuse is left for the hearers of the Law, if they remain indifferent, after that God has revealed himself to them?

What follows is an abridgment of the Law,[1] which is also found in the writings of Moses, (Deut. vi. 5.) For, though it is divided into two tables, the first of which relates to the worship of God, and the second to charity, Moses properly and wisely draws up this summary,[2] that the Jews may perceive what is the will of God in each of the commandments. And although we ought to love God far more than men, yet most properly does God, instead of worship or honour, require *love* from us, because in this way he declares that no other worship is pleasing to Him than what is voluntary; for no man will actually obey God but he who *loves* Him. But as the wicked and sinful inclinations of the flesh draw us aside from what is right, Moses shows that our life will not be regulated aright till the *love* of God fill all our senses. Let us therefore learn, that the commencement of godliness is the *love* of God, because God disdains the forced services of men, and chooses to be worshipped freely and willingly; and let us also learn, that under the *love* of God is included the reverence due to him.

Moses does not add the *mind*, but mentions only the *heart*, and the *soul*, and the *strength;* and though the present division into four clauses is more full, yet it does not alter the sense. For while Moses intends to teach generally that God ought to be perfectly *loved*, and that whatever powers belong to men ought to be devoted to this object, he reckoned it enough, after mentioning the *soul* and the *heart*, to add the *strength*, that he might not leave any part of us uninfluenced by the *love* of God; and we know also that under the word *heart* the Hebrews sometimes include the *mind*,[3] particularly when it is joined to the word *soul*. What is the difference between the *mind* and the *heart*, both

[1] "Un abbregé ou sommaire de la Loy;"—"an abridgment or summary of the Law."

[2] "Moyse a fort bien et sagement comprins le tout en ce sommaire;"—"Moses has very properly and wisely comprehended the whole in this summary."

[3] "L'entendement;"—"the understanding."

in this passage and in Matthew, I do not trouble myself to inquire, except that I consider the *mind* to denote the loftier abode of reason, from which all our thoughts and deliberations flow.

It now appears from this summary that, in the commandments of the Law, God does not look at what men can do, but at what they ought to do; since in this infirmity of the flesh it is impossible that perfect *love* can obtain dominion, for we know how strongly all the senses of our soul are disposed to vanity. Lastly, we learn from this, that God does not rest satisfied with the outward appearance of works, but chiefly demands the inward feelings, that from a good root good fruits may grow.

39. *And the second is like it.* He assigns the *second* place to mutual kindness among men, for the worship of God is *first* in order. The *commandment* to love our neighbours, he tells us, is *like* the first, because it depends upon it. For, since every man is devoted to himself, there will never be true charity towards *neighbours*, unless where the love of God reigns; for it is a mercenary love[1] which the children of the world entertain for each other, because every one of them has regard to his own advantage. On the other hand, it is impossible for the love of God to reign without producing brotherly kindness among men.

Again, when Moses commanded us to love our neighbours as ourselves, he did not intend to put the *love* of *ourselves* in the first place, so that a man may first love *himself*, and then love his *neighbours;* as the sophists of the *Sorbonne* are wont to cavil, that a rule must always go before what it regulates. But as we are too much devoted to ourselves, Moses, in correcting this fault, places our neighbours in an equal rank with us; thus forbidding every man to pay so much attention to himself as to disregard others, because kindness unites all in one body. And by correcting the *self-*

[1] "Car l'amour qu'ont les enfans de ce monde les uns envers les autres n'est point une vray amour, mais est une amour mercenaire;"—"for the love which the children of the world have for each other is not a true love, but is a mercenary love."

love (φιλαυτίαν) which separates some persons from others, he brings each of them into a common union, and—as it were—into a mutual embrace. Hence we conclude, that charity is justly pronounced by Paul to be *the bond of perfection*, (Col. iii. 14,) and, in another passage, *the fulfilling of the law*, (Rom. xiii. 10;) for all the commandments of the second table must be referred to it.

Luke X. 28. *Do this, and thou shalt live.* I have explained a little before, how this promise agrees with freely bestowed justification by faith; for the reason why God justifies us freely is, not that the Law does not point out perfect righteousness, but because we fail in keeping it, and the reason why it is declared to be impossible for us to obtain life by it is, that *it is weak through our flesh*, (Rom. viii. 3.) So then these two statements are perfectly consistent with each other, that the Law teaches how men may obtain righteousness by works, and yet that no man is justified by works, because the fault lies not in the doctrine of the Law, but in men. It was the intention of Christ, in the meantime, to vindicate himself from the calumny which, he knew, was brought against him by the unlearned and ignorant, that he set aside the Law, so far as it is a perpetual rule of righteousness.

29. *But he wishing to justify himself.* This question might appear to be of no importance for *justifying* a man. But if we recollect what was formerly stated, that the hypocrisy of men is chiefly detected by means of the second table—for, while they pretend to be eminent worshippers of God, they openly violate charity towards their neighbours—it will be easy to infer from this, that the Pharisee practised this evasion, in order that, concealed under the false mask of holiness, he might not be brought forth to light. So then, aware that the test of charity would prove unfavourable to him, he seeks concealment under the word *neighbour*, that he may not be discovered to be a transgressor of the Law. But we have already seen, that on this subject the Law was corrupted by the scribes, because they reckoned none to be their *neighbours*

but those who were worthy of it. Hence, too, this principle was received among them, that we have a right to *hate our enemies*, (Matth. v. 43.) For the only method to which hypocrites can resort for avoiding the condemnation of themselves, is to turn away as far as they are able, that their life may not be tried by the judgment of the Law.

30. *And Jesus answering said.* Christ might have stated simply, that the word *neighbour* extends indiscriminately to every man, because the whole human race is united by a sacred bond of fellowship. And, indeed, the Lord employed this word in the Law, for no other reason than to draw us sweetly to mutual kindness. The commandment would have run more clearly thus: *Love every man as thyself.* But as men are blinded by their pride, so that every man is satisfied with himself, scarcely deigns to admit others to an equal rank, and withholds from them the duties he owes them, the Lord purposely declares that all are *neighbours*, that the very relationship may produce mutual love. To make any person our *neighbour*, therefore, it is enough that he be a man; for it is not in our power to blot out our common nature.

But Christ intended to draw the reply from the Pharisee, that he might condemn himself. For in consequence of the authoritative decision being generally received among them, that no man is our *neighbour* unless he is our friend, if Christ had put a direct question to him, he would never have made an explicit acknowledgment, that under the word *neighbour* all men are included, which the comparison brought forward forces him to confess. The general truth conveyed is, that the greatest stranger is *our neighbour*, because God has bound all men together, for the purpose of assisting each other. He glances briefly, however, at the Jews, and especially at the priests; because, while they boasted of being the children of the same Father, and of being separated by the privilege of adoption from the rest of the nations, so as to be God's sacred heritage, yet, with barbarous and unfeeling contempt, they despised each other, as if no relationship had subsisted between them. For there is no doubt that Christ describes the cruel neglect of brotherly kindness, with which they knew that they were chargeable. But here, as I have

said, the chief design is to show that the *neighbourhood*, which lays us under obligation to mutual offices of kindness, is not confined to friends or relatives, but extends to the whole human race.

To prove this, Christ compares *a Samaritan* to *a priest* and *a Levite*. It is well known what deadly hatred the Jews bore to the *Samaritans*, so that, notwithstanding their living close beside them, they were always at the greatest variance. Christ now says, that a Jew, an inhabitant of *Jericho*, on his journey *from Jerusalem*, having been wounded by *robbers*, received no assistance either from *a Levite or from a priest*, both of whom met with him lying on the road, and *half-dead*, but that a *Samaritan* showed him great kindness, and then asks, *Which of these three was neighbour* to the Jew? This subtle doctor could not escape from preferring the *Samaritan* to the other two. For here, as in a mirror, we behold that common relationship of men, which the scribes endeavoured to blot out by their wicked sophistry;[1] and the *compassion*, which an enemy showed to a Jew, demonstrates that the guidance and teaching of nature are sufficient to show that man was created for the sake of man. Hence it is inferred that there is a mutual obligation between all men.

The allegory which is here contrived by the advocates of free will is too absurd to deserve refutation. According to them, under the figure of a wounded man is described the condition of Adam after the fall; from which they infer that the power of acting well was not wholly extinguished in him; because he is said to be only *half-dead*. As if it had been the design of Christ, in this passage, to speak of the corruption of human nature, and to inquire whether the wound which Satan inflicted on Adam were deadly or curable; nay, as if he had not plainly, and without a figure, declared in another passage, that all are *dead*, but those whom he quickens by *his voice*, (John v. 25.) As little plausibility belongs to another allegory, which, however, has been so highly satisfactory, that it has been admitted by almost universal consent, as if it had been a revelation from heaven. This *Samaritan* they imagine to be Christ, because he is our guardian; and

[1] "Par leur fausse glose et cavillation meschante;"—"by their false gloss and wicked sophistry."

they tell us that *wine was poured*, along with *oil*, into the wound, because Christ cures us by repentance and by a promise of grace. They have contrived a third subtlety, that Christ does not immediately restore health, but sends us to the Church, as *an innkeeper*, to be gradually cured. I acknowledge that I have no liking for any of these interpretations; but we ought to have a deeper reverence for Scripture than to reckon ourselves at liberty to disguise its natural meaning. And, indeed, any one may see that the curiosity of certain men has led them to contrive these speculations, contrary to the intention of Christ.

Matthew XXII. 40. *On these two commandments.* I now return to Matthew, where Christ says that *all the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments;* not that he intends to limit to them[1] all the doctrine of Scripture, but because all that is anywhere taught as to the manner of living a holy and righteous life must be referred to these two leading points. For Christ does not treat generally of what *the Law and the Prophets* contain, but, in drawing up his reply, states that nothing else is required in *the Law and the Prophets* than that every man should *love God* and his *neighbours;* as if he had said, that the sum of a holy and upright life consists in the worship of God and in charity to men, as Paul states that charity is *the fulfilling of the law*, (Rom. xiii. 10.) And therefore some ill-informed persons are mistaken in interpreting this saying of Christ, as if we ought to seek nothing higher in *the Law and the Prophets.* For as a distinction ought to be made between the promises and the commandments, so in this passage Christ does not state generally what we ought to learn from the word of God, but explains, in a manner suited to the occasion, the end to which all the commandments are directed. Yet the free forgiveness of sins, by which we are reconciled to God,—confidence in calling on God, which is the earnest of the future inheritance,—and all the other parts of faith, though they hold the first rank in the Law, do not *depend on these two commandments;* for it

[1] "Restraindre à ce sommaire;"—"to limit to this summary."

is one thing to demand what we owe, and another thing to offer what we do not possess. The same thing is expressed in other words by Mark, that *there is no other commandment greater than these.*

Mark XII. 32. *Master, thou hast spoken well, and with truth.* Mark alone mentions that the *scribe* was softened down; and it is worthy of notice that, though he had attacked Christ maliciously, and with the intention of taking him by surprise, not only does he silently yield to the latter, but openly and candidly assents to what Christ had said. Thus we see that he did not belong to the class of those enemies whose obstinacy is incurable; for, though they have been a hundred times convinced, yet they do not cease to oppose the truth in some manner. From this reply it may also be concluded, that Christ did not precisely include under these two words the rule of life, but embraced the opportunity which presented itself for reproving the false and hypocritical holiness of the scribes, who, giving their whole attention to outward ceremonies, almost entirely disregarded the spiritual worship of God, and cared little about brotherly kindness. Now though the scribe was infected by such corruptions, yet, as sometimes happens, he had obtained from the Law the seed of right knowledge, which lay choked in his heart, and on that account he easily allows himself to be withdrawn from the wicked custom.

33. *Is better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices.* But it appears to be incongruous that *sacrifices*, which are a part of divine worship, and belong to the first table of the Law, should be reckoned of less importance than charity towards men. The reply is, Though the worship of God is greatly preferable, and is more valuable than all the duties of a holy life, yet its outward exercises ought not to be estimated so highly as to swallow up brotherly kindness. For we know that brotherly kindness, in itself and simply, is pleasing to God, though *sacrifices* are not regarded by him with delight or approbation, except with a view to another object. Besides, it is naked and empty *sacrifices* that are here spoken

of; for our Lord contrasts a hypocritical appearance of piety with true and sincere uprightness. The same doctrine is to be found very frequently in the prophets, that hypocrites may know that *sacrifices* are of no value, unless spiritual truth be joined to them, and that God is not appeased by offerings of beasts, where brotherly kindness is neglected.

34. *But when Jesus saw.* Whether this *scribe* made any farther progress is uncertain; but as he had shown himself to be teachable, Christ stretches out the hand to him, and teaches us, by his example, that we ought to assist those in whom there is any beginning either of docility or of right understanding. There appear to have been two reasons why Christ declared that this scribe *was not far from the kingdom of God.* It was because he was easily persuaded to do his duty, and because he skilfully distinguished the outward worship of God from necessary duties. Nor was it so much with the design of praising as of exhorting him, that Christ declared that *he was near the kingdom of God;* and in his person Christ encourages us all, after having once entered into the right path, to proceed with so much the greater cheerfulness. By these words we are also taught that many, while they are still held and involved in error, advance with closed eyes towards the road, and in this manner are prepared for running in the course of the Lord, when the time arrives.

And after that, no man ventured to put a question to him. The assertion of the Evangelists, that the mouth of adversaries was stopped, so they *did not venture* any more to lay snares for Christ, must not be so understood as if they desisted from their wicked obstinacy; for they groaned within, like wild beasts shut up in their dens, or, like unruly horses, they bit the bridle. But the more hardened their obstinacy, and the more incorrigible their rebellion, so much the more illustrious was Christ's triumph over both. And this victory, which he obtained, ought greatly to encourage us never to become dispirited in the defence of the truth, being assured of success. It will often happen, indeed, that enemies shall molest and insult us till the end, but God will at length secure that their fury shall recoil on their own heads, and that, in spite of their efforts, truth shall be victorious.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXII. 41. And when the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus asked them, 42. Saying, What think you of Christ? whose son is he? They say to him, David's. 43. He saith to them, How then doth David by the Spirit call him Lord, saying, 44. The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I have made thy enemies thy footstool?[1] 45. If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son? 46. And no man could make any reply to him;[2] nor did any man from that day venture to put any more questions to him.	XII. 35. And Jesus answering said, while he was teaching in the temple, How do the scribes say that Christ is the son of David? 36. For David himself by the Holy Spirit said, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool.[1] 37. David himself therefore calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son? And a vast multitude heard him gladly.	XX. 41. And he said to them, How do they say that Christ is the son of David? 42. And David himself saith in the Book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, 43. Till I make thy enemies thy footstool.[1] 44. David therefore calleth him Lord; and how is he his son?

Matthew XXII. 42. *What think you of Christ?* Mark and Luke express more clearly the reason why Christ put this question. It was because there prevailed among *the scribes* an erroneous opinion, that the promised Redeemer would be one of *David's* sons and successors, who would bring along with him nothing more elevated than human nature. For from the very commencement Satan endeavoured, by all the arts which he could devise, to put forward some pretended Christ, who was not the true Mediator between God and men. God having so frequently promised that Christ would proceed from the *seed*, or from the *loins, of David*, this conviction was so deeply rooted in their minds, that they could not endure to have him stripped of human nature. Satan therefore permitted Christ to be acknowledged as a true man and a *son of David*, for he would in vain have attempted to overturn this article of faith; but—what was worse—he stripped him of his Divinity, as if he had been only one of the ordinary descendants of Adam. But in this manner the hope of future and eternal life, as well as spiritual

[1] "Jusques a tant que je mettray tes ennemis pour le marchepied de tes pieds;"—"till I shall place thy enemies as the footstool for thy feet."

[2] "Et nul ne luy pouvoit respondre une parolle;"—"and none could answer a word to him."

righteousness, was abolished. And ever since Christ was manifested to the world, heretics have attempted by various contrivances—and as it were under ground—to overturn sometimes his human, and sometimes his Divine nature, that either he might not have full power to save us, or we might not have ready access to him. Now as the hour of his death was already approaching, the Lord himself intended to attest his divinity, that all the godly might boldly rely on him; for if he had been only man, we would have had no right either to glory in him, or to expect salvation from him.

We now perceive his design, which was, to assert that he was the Son of God, not so much on his own account, as to make our faith rest on his heavenly power. For as the weakness of the flesh, by which he approached to us, gives us confidence, that we may not hesitate to draw near to him, so if that weakness alone were before our eyes, it would rather fill us with fear and despair than excite proper confidence. Yet it must be observed, that *the scribes* are not reproved for teaching that *Christ would be the Son of David*, but for imagining that he was a mere man, who would come from heaven, to assume the nature and person of a man. Nor does our Lord make a direct assertion about himself, but simply shows that *the scribes* hold a wicked error in expecting that the Redeemer will proceed only from the earth and from human lineage. But though this doctrine was well known to be held by them, we learn from Matthew, that he interrogated them in presence of the people what their sentiments were.

43. *How then does David by the Spirit call him Lord?* The assertion made by Christ, that *David* spoke *by the Spirit*, is emphatic; for he contrasts the prediction of a future event with the testimony of a present event. By this phrase he anticipates the sophistry by which the Jews of the present day attempt to escape. They allege that this prediction celebrates the reign of *David*, as if, representing God to be the Author of his reign, *David* would rise above the mad attempts of his enemies, and affirmed that they would gain nothing by opposing the will of God. That *the scribes* might

not shelter themselves under such an objection, Christ began with stating that the psalm was not composed in reference to the person of *David*, but was dictated *by the* prophetic *Spirit* to describe the future reign of Christ; as it may easily be learned even from the passage itself, that what we read there does not apply either to *David*, or to any other earthly king; for there *David* introduces a king clothed with a new priesthood, by which the ancient shadows of the Law must be abolished, (Psalm cx. 4.)

We must now see how he proves that Christ will hold a higher rank than to be merely descended from the seed of *David*. It is because *David*, who was king and head of the people, *calls him Lord;* from which it follows, that there is something in him greater than man. But the argument appears to be feeble and inconclusive; for it may be objected that, when *David* gave the psalm to the people to sing, without having any view to his own person, he assigned to Christ dominion over others. But to this I reply that, as he was one of the members of the Church, nothing would have been more improper than to shut himself out from the common doctrine. Here he enjoins all the children of God to boast, as with one voice, that they are safe through the protection of a heavenly and invincible King. If he be separated from the body of the Church, he will not partake of the salvation promised through Christ. If this were the voice of a few persons, the dominion of Christ would not extend even to *David*. But now neither he, nor any other person, can be excluded from subjection to him, without cutting himself off from the hope of eternal salvation. Since then there was nothing better for *David* than to be included in the Church, it was not less for himself than for the rest of the people that *David* composed this psalm. In short, by this title Christ is pronounced to be supreme and sole King, who holds the preeminence among all believers; and no exception ought to be allowed to ranking all in one class, when he is appointed to be the Redeemer of the Church. There can be no doubt, therefore, that David represents himself also as a subject of his government, so as to be reckoned one of the number of the people of God.

But now another question arises: Might not God have raised up one whom he appointed from among mankind to be a Redeemer, so as to be *David's Lord*, though *he was his son?* For here it is not the essential name of God, but only *Adonai*[1] that is employed, and this term is frequently applied to men. I reply: Christ takes for granted that he who is taken out of the number of men, and raised to such a rank of honour, as to be the supreme Head of the whole Church, is not a mere man, but possesses also the majesty of God. For the eternal God, who by an oath makes this claim for himself, that *before him every knee shall bow*, (Isa. xlv. 23,) at the same time swears that *he will not give his glory to another*, (Isa. xlii. 8.) But, according to the testimony of Paul, when Christ was raised to kingly power, *there was given to him a name which is above every name, that before him every knee should bow*, (Rom. xiv. 11; Philip. ii. 9.) And though Paul had never said this, yet such is the fact, that Christ is above *David* and other holy kings, because he also ranks higher than angels; which would not apply to a created man, unless he were also *God manifested in the flesh*, (1 Tim. iii. 16.) I do acknowledge that his divine essence is not expressed directly and in so many words; but it may easily be inferred that He is God, who is placed above all creatures.

44. *The* LORD *said to my Lord.* Here the Holy Spirit puts into the mouth of all the godly a song of triumph, that they may boldly defy Satan and all the ungodly, and mock at their rage, when they endeavour to drive Christ from his throne. That they may not hesitate or tremble, when they perceive great emotions produced in the earth, they are commanded to place the holy and inviolable decree of God in opposition to all the exertions of adversaries. The meaning therefore is: whatever may be the madness of men, all that

[1] Our authorized version of Psalm cx. 1 runs thus: *The* LORD *said unto my Lord.* While the word *Lord* occurs twice in this clause, the Translators have followed their ordinary method of printing the first in small capitals, to present it to the eye of the reader as standing for the Hebrew word יהוה, (*Jehovah*,) which our Author calls "the essential name of God," while the second stands for אדני, (*Adonai*,) *my Lord*, which, as he also mentions, "is frequently applied to men."—*Ed.*

they shall dare to contrive will be of no avail for destroying the kingdom of Christ, which has been set up, not by the will of men, but by the appointment of God, and therefore is supported by everlasting strength. Whenever this kingdom is violently attacked, let us call to remembrance this revelation from heaven; for undoubtedly this promise was put into the hand of Christ, that every believer may apply it to his own use. But God never changes or deceives, so as to retract what has once gone out of his mouth.

Sit at my right hand. This phrase is used metaphorically for the second or next rank, which is occupied by God's deputy. And therefore it signifies, to hold the highest government and power in the name of God, as we know that God has committed his authority to his only-begotten Son, so as to govern his Church by his agency. This mode of expression, therefore, does not denote any particular place, but, on the contrary, embraces heaven and earth under the government of Christ. And God declares that Christ will *sit till his enemies* be subdued, in order to inform us that his kingdom will remain invincible against every attack; not that, when *his enemies* have been subdued, he will be deprived of the power which had been granted to him, but that, while the whole multitude of his enemies shall be laid low, his power will remain for ever unimpaired. In the meantime, it points out that condition of his kingdom which we perceive in the present day, that we may not be uneasy when we see it attacked on all sides.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXIII. 1. Then Jesus spoke to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2. Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses. 3. Observe and do, therefore, all things whatever they command you to observe; but do not according to their works; for they say and do not. 4. For they bind heavy and intolerable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they refuse	XII. 38. And he said to them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, who love to walk in robes, and love salutations	XI. 45. And one of the lawyers[1] answering said to him, Master, in saying these things thou also reproachest us. 46. And he said, Woe also to you, lawyers! for you load men with burdens which are intolerable; and you your-

[1] "Un des docteurs de la loy;"—"one of the doctors of the law."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
to touch them with their finger. 5. And they do all their works that they may be seen by men, and make their phylacteries broad, and wear large fringes on their robes, 6. And love the first places at entertainments, and the first seats in the synagogues, 7. And salutations in the market-place, and to be called by men Rabbi.[1] 8. But as for you, be not called Rabbi;[2] for there is one who is your Master, Christ; and you are all brethren. 9. And do not call any one on earth your Father; for one is your Father, who is in heaven. 10. And be not called Masters;[3] for one is your Master, Christ. 11. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12. But he that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.	in the market-places, 39. And the first seats in the synagogues, and the first places at entertainments.	selves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (*A little before.*) 43. Woe to you, Pharisees! who desire the first seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place. XX. 45. And while all the people were hearing, he said to his disciples, 46. Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in robes, and love salutations in the market-places, and the first seats in the synagogues, and the first places at entertainments.

Matthew XXIII. 1. *Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes.* This warning was highly useful, that, amidst contentions and the noise of combats, amidst the trouble and confusion of public affairs, amidst the destruction of proper and lawful order, the authority of the word of God might remain entire. The design of Christ was, that the people might not, in consequence of being offended at the vices of *the scribes*,[4] throw away reverence for the Law. For we know how prone the minds of men are to entertain dislike of the Law; and more especially when the life of their pastors is dissolute, and does not correspond to their words, almost all grow wanton through their example, as if they had received permission to sin with impunity. The same thing happens—and something worse—when contentions arise; for the greater part of men, having thrown off the yoke, give utterance to their wicked desires, and break out into extreme contempt.

[1] "Estre appelez des hommes Maistres;"—"to be called by men Masters."

[2] "Ne soyez point appelez Maistres;"—"be not called Masters."

[3] "Docteurs;"—"doctors."

[4] "Offensé et scandalizé des vices qu'on voyoit és scribes;"—"offended and scandalized at the vices which they saw in the scribes."

At that time *the scribes* burned with covetousness and swelled with ambition; their extortions were notorious; their cruelty was formidable; and such was their corruption of manners, that one would think they had conspired for the destruction of the Law. Besides, they had perverted by their false opinions the pure and natural meaning of the Law, so that Christ was constrained to enter into a sharp conflict with them; because their amazing rage hurried them on to extinguish the light of truth. So then, because there was danger that many persons, partly on account of such abuses, and partly on account of the din of controversies, would come to despise all religion, Christ seasonably meets them, and declares that it would be unreasonable if, on account of the vices of men, true religion were to perish, or reverence for the Law to be in any degree diminished. As *the scribes* were obstinate and inveterate enemies, and as they held the Church oppressed through their tyranny, Christ was compelled to expose their wickedness; for if good and simple men had not been withdrawn from bondage to them, the door would have been shut against the Gospel. There was also another reason; for the common people think themselves at liberty to do whatever they see done by their rulers, whose corrupt manners they form into a law.

But that no man might put a different interpretation on what he was about to say, he begins by stating, that whatever sort of men the teachers were, it was altogether unreasonable, either that on account of their filth the word of God should receive any stain, or that on account of their wicked examples men should hold themselves at liberty to commit sin. And this wisdom ought to be carefully observed; for many persons, having no other object in view than to bring hatred and detestation on the wicked and ungodly, mix and confound every thing through their inconsiderate zeal. All discipline is despised, and shame is trampled under foot; in short, there remains no respect for what is honourable, and, what is more, many are emboldened by it, and intentionally blazon the sins of priests, that they may have a pretext for sinning with less restraint. But in attacking the *scribes*, Christ proceeds in such a manner, that he first vindicates the

Law of God from contempt. We must attend to this caution also, if we desire that our reproofs should be of any service. But, on the other hand, we ought to observe, that no dread of giving offence prevented Christ from exposing ungodly teachers as they deserved; only he preserved such moderation, that the doctrine of God might not come to be despised on account of the wickedness of men.

To inform us that he spoke publicly about their vices, not to raise envy against their persons, but to prevent the contagion from spreading more widely, Mark expressly states that *he spoke to them* IN HIS DOCTRINE; by which words he means that the hearers were profitably warned to beware of them. Now, though *Luke* appears to restrict it to the *disciples*, yet it is probable that the discourse was addressed indiscriminately to the whole multitude; which appears more clearly from *Matthew*, and, indeed, the subject itself required that Christ should have his eye on all without exception.

2. *In the chair of Moses.* Reasons were not wanting for inserting here what *Luke* relates at a different place. Besides that the doctrine is the same, I have no doubt that *Luke*, after having said that the scribes were sharply and severely reproved by our Lord, added also the other reproofs which *Matthew* delayed till the proper place; for already we have frequently seen that the Evangelists, as occasion required, collected into one place various discourses of Christ. But as the narrative of *Matthew* is more full, I choose rather to take his words as the subject of exposition.

Our Lord gives a general exhortation to believers to beware of conforming their life to the wicked conduct of *the scribes*, but, on the contrary, to regulate it by the rule of the Law which they hear from the mouth of *the scribes;* for it was necessary (as I have lately hinted) that he should reprove many abuses in them, that the whole people might not be infected. Lest, through their crimes, the doctrine of which they were the ministers and heralds should be injured, he enjoins believers to attend to their words, and not to their actions; as if he had said, that there is no reason why the bad examples of pastors should hinder the children of God from

holiness of life. That the word *scribes*, agreeably to the Hebrew idiom, denotes the teachers or expounders of the Law, is well known; and it is certain that *Luke* calls the same persons *lawyers*.[1]

Now our Lord refers peculiarly to the Pharisees, who belonged to the number of *the scribes*, because at that time this sect held the highest rank in the government of the Church, and in the exposition of Scripture. For we have formerly mentioned that, while the *Sadducees* and *Essenes* preferred the literal interpretation of Scripture, the *Pharisees* followed a different manner of teaching, which had been handed down, as it were, to them by their ancestors, which was, to make subtle inquiries into the mystical meaning of Scripture. This was also the reason why they received their name; for they are called *Pherusim*, that is, expounders.[2] And though they had debased the whole of Scripture by their false opinions, yet, as they plumed themselves on that popular method of instruction, their authority was highly esteemed in explaining the worship of God and the rule of a holy life. The phrase ought, therefore, to be thus interpreted: "*The Pharisees and other scribes*, or, *the scribes, among whom the Pharisees are the most highly esteemed*, when they speak to you, are good teachers of a holy life, but by their works they give you very bad instructions; and therefore attend to their lips rather than to their hands."

It may now be asked, Ought we to submit to all the instructions of teachers without exception? For it is plain enough, that the scribes of that age had wickedly and basely corrupted the Law by false inventions, had *burdened* wretched souls by unjust laws, and had corrupted the worship of God by many superstitions; but Christ wishes their doctrine to be observed, as if it had been unlawful to oppose their tyranny. The answer is easy. He does not absolutely compare any kind of doctrine with the life, but the design of Christ was, to distinguish the holy Law of God from their profane works. For to *sit in the chair of Moses* is nothing else than to teach, according to the Law of God, how we ought

[1] "*Docteurs de la loy*;"—"*teachers*," or "*doctors of the law*."
[2] *Harmony*, vol. i. p. 281.

to live. And though I am not quite certain whence the phrase is derived, yet there is probability in the conjecture of those who refer it to the *pulpit* which *Ezra* erected, from which the Law was read aloud, (Neh. viii. 4.) Certainly, when the Rabbins expounded Scripture, those who were about to speak rose up in succession; but it was perhaps the custom that the Law itself should be proclaimed from a more elevated spot. That man, therefore, *sits in the chair of Moses* who teaches, not from himself, or at his own suggestion, but according to the authority and word of God. But it denotes, at the same time, a lawful calling; for Christ commands that the scribes should be heard, because they were the public teachers of the Church.

The Papists reckon it enough, that those who issue laws should possess the title and occupy the station; for in this way they torture the words of Christ to mean, that we are bound to receive obediently whatever the ordinary prelates of the Church enjoin. But this calumny is abundantly refuted by another injunction of Christ, when he bids them *beware of the leaven of the Pharisees*, (Matth. xvi. 6.) If Christ pronounces it to be not only lawful, but even proper, to reject whatever of their own the scribes mingle with the pure doctrine of the Law, certainly we are not bound to embrace, without discrimination or the exercise of judgment, whatever they are pleased to enjoin. Besides, if Christ had intended here to bind the consciences of his followers to the commandments of men, there would have been no good ground for what he said in another passage, that *it is in vain to worship God by the commandments of men*, (Matth. xv. 9.) Hence it is evident, that Christ exhorts the people to obey the scribes, only so far as they adhere to the pure and simple exposition of the Law. For the exposition of *Augustine* is accurate, and in accordance with Christ's meaning, that "the scribes taught the Law of God while they *sat in the chair of Moses;* and, therefore, that the sheep ought to hear the voice of the Shepherd by them, as by hirelings." To which words he immediately adds: "God therefore teaches by them; but if they wish to teach any thing of their own, refuse to hear, refuse to do them." With this sentiment

accords what the same writer says in his Fourth Book of Christian Doctrine: "Because good believers do not obediently listen to any sort of man, but to God himself; therefore we may profitably listen even to those whose lives are not profitable." It was, therefore, not *the chair* of the scribes, but *the chair of Moses*, that constrained them to teach what was good, even when they did not do what was good. For what they did in their life was their own; but *the chair* of another man did not permit them to teach what was their own.

4. *For they bind heavy and intolerable burdens.* He does not charge the scribes with oppressing and tyrannising over souls by harsh and unjust laws; for, though they had introduced many superfluous ceremonies—as is evident from other passages—yet Christ does not at present refer to that vice, because his design is, to compare right doctrine with a wicked and dissolute life. That the Law of God should be called *a heavy and intolerable burden* is not wonderful, and more especially in reference to our weakness. But though the scribes required nothing but what God had enjoined, yet Christ reproves the stern and rigid manner of teaching which was usually followed by those proud hypocrites, who authoritatively demand from others what they owe to God, and are rigorous in enforcing duties, and yet indolently dispense with the performance of what they so strictly enjoin on others, and allow themselves to do whatever they please. In this sense Ezekiel (xxxiv. 4) reproaches them for ruling with sternness and rigour. For those who truly fear God, though they sincerely and earnestly endeavour to bring their disciples to obey Him, yet as they are more severe towards themselves than towards others, they are not so rigid in exacting obedience, and, being conscious of their own weakness, kindly forgive the weak. But it is impossible to imagine any thing that can exceed the insolence in commanding, or the cruelty, of stupid despisers of God, because they give themselves no concern about the difficulty of doing those things from which they relieve themselves; and therefore no man will exercise moderation

in commanding others, unless he shall first become his own teacher.[1]

5. *And all their works they do that they may be seen by men.* He had lately said that the *scribes* live very differently from what they teach; but now he adds that, if they have any thing which is apparently good, it is hypocritical and worthless, because they have no other design than to please men, and to vaunt themselves. And here zeal for piety and a holy life is contrasted with the mask of those *works* which serve no purpose but for ostentation; for an upright worshipper of God will never give himself up to that empty parade by which hypocrites are puffed up. Thus not only is the ambition of *the scribes and Pharisees* reproved, but our Lord, after having condemned the transgression and contempt of the Law of God in their whole life, that they might not shield themselves by their pretended holiness, anticipates them by replying, that those things of which they boast are absolute trifles, and of no value whatever, because they spring from mere ostentation. He afterwards produces a single instance, by which that ambition was easily perceived, which was, that by the *fringes of their robes* they held themselves out to the eyes of men as good observers of the Law.

And make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge the fringes of their robes. For why were their *fringes* made *broader*, and their *phylacteries* more magnificent, than what was customary, except for idle display? The Lord had commanded the Jews to wear, both on their forehead and on their raiment, some remarkable passages selected out of the Law, (Deut. vi. 8.) As forgetfulness of the Law easily creeps upon the flesh, the Lord intended in this manner to keep it constantly in the remembrance of his people; for they were likewise enjoined to inscribe such sentences *on the posts of their houses*, (Deut. vi. 9,) that, wherever they turned their eyes, some godly warning might immediately meet them.

[1] "Si premierement il ne se regle luy-mesme, et s'assubjetit aux mesmes choses qu'il commande;"—"if he do not first rule himself, and submit to the same things which he commands."

But what did *the scribes* do? In order to distinguish themselves from the rest of the people, they carried about with them the commandments of God more magnificently inscribed on their garments; and in this boasting there was displayed an offensive ambition.

Let us also learn from this, how ingenious men are in mixing up vain deception, in order to conceal their vices under some pretext and cloak of virtues, by turning to the purposes of their own hypocrisy those exercises of piety which God has enjoined. Nothing was more profitable than to exercise all their senses in the contemplation of the Law, and it was not without good reason that this was enjoined by the Lord. But so far were they from profiting by these simple instructions, that, by making perfect righteousness to consist in the adorning of robes, they despised the Law throughout their whole life. For it was impossible to treat the Law of God with greater contempt, than when they imagined that they kept it by pompous dress, or pronounced masks contrived for enacting a play to be a keeping of the Law.

What Mark and Luke say about the *robes* relates to the same subject. We know that the inhabitants of Eastern countries commonly used long *robes*,—a custom which they retain to this day. But it is evident from Zechariah (xiii. 4) that the prophets were distinguished from the rest of the people by a particular form of a cloak. And, indeed, it was highly reasonable that the teachers should dress in this manner, that there might be a higher degree of gravity and modesty in their dress than in that of the common people; but the *scribes* had made an improper use of it by turning it into luxury and display. Their example has been followed by the Popish priests, among whom *robes* are manifestly nothing more than the badges of proud tyranny.

6. *And love the first places at entertainments.* He proves, by evident signs, that no zeal for piety exists in the *scribes*, but that they are wholly devoted to ambition. For to seek *the first places* and *the first seats* belongs only to those who choose rather to exalt themselves among men, than to enjoy

the approbation of God. But above all, Christ condemns them for desiring to be called *masters;* for, though the name *Rabbi* in itself denotes excellence, yet at that time the prevailing practice among the Jews was, to give this name to the *masters* and *teachers* of the Law. But Christ asserts that this honour does not belong to any except himself; from which it follows that it cannot, without doing injury to him, be applied to men. But there is an appearance of excessive harshness, and even of absurdity, in this, since Christ does not now teach us in his own person, but appoints and ordains *masters* for us. Now it is absurd to take away the title from those on whom he bestows the office, and more especially since, while he was on earth, he appointed apostles to discharge the office of teaching in his name.

If the question be about the title, Paul certainly did not intend to do any injury to Christ by sacrilegious usurpation or boasting, when he declared that he was *a master and teacher of the Gentiles*, (1 Tim. ii. 7.) But as Christ had no other design than to bring all, from the least to the greatest, to obey him, so as to preserve his own authority unimpaired, we need not give ourselves much trouble about the word. Christ therefore does not attach importance to the title bestowed on those who discharge the office of teaching, but restrains them within proper limits, that they may not rule over the faith of brethren. We must always attend to the distinction, that Christ alone ought to be obeyed, because concerning him alone was the voice of the Father heard aloud from heaven, *Hear him*, (Matth. xvii. 5;) and that teachers are his ministers in such a manner that he ought to be heard in them, and that they are *masters* under him, so far as they represent his person. The general meaning is, that his authority must remain entire, and that no mortal man ought to claim the smallest portion of it. Thus he is the only Pastor; but yet he admits many pastors under him, provided that he hold the pre-eminence over them all, and that by them he alone govern the Church.

And you are all brethren. This opposite clause must be observed. For, since *we are brethren*, he maintains that no man has a right to hold the place of a *master* over others;

and hence it follows, that he does not condemn that authority of *masters* which does not violate brotherly intercourse among the godly. In short, nothing else is here enjoined than that all should depend on the mouth of Christ alone. Nearly to the same purpose does Paul argue, when he says that we have no right to *judge* one another, for all are *brethren*, and *all must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ*, (Rom. xiv. 10.)

9. *And call no man on earth your Father.* He claims for God alone the honour of *Father*, in nearly the same sense as he lately asserted that he himself is the only *Master;* for this name was not assumed by men for themselves, but was given to them by God. And therefore it is not only lawful *to call men on earth* FATHERS, but it would be wicked to deprive them of that honour. Nor is there any importance in the distinction which some have brought forward, that men, by whom children have been begotten, are *fathers* according to the flesh, but that God alone is *the Father of spirits*. I readily acknowledge that in this manner God is sometimes distinguished from men, as in Heb. xii. 5, but as Paul more than once calls himself a spiritual *father*, (1 Cor. iv. 15; Philip. ii. 22,) we must see how this agrees with the words of Christ. The true meaning therefore is, that the honour of a *father* is falsely ascribed to men, when it obscures the glory of God. Now this is done, whenever a mortal man, viewed apart from God, is accounted a *father*, since all the degrees of relationship depend on God alone through Christ, and are held together in such a manner that, strictly speaking, God alone is the *Father* of all.

10. *For one is your Master*, even *Christ*. He repeats a second time the former statement about Christ's office as *Master*, in order to inform us that the lawful order is, that God alone rule over us, and possess the power and authority of a *Father*, and that Christ subject all to his doctrine, and have them as disciples; as it is elsewhere said, that Christ is the only *head of the whole Church*, (Eph. i.

22,) because the whole body ought to be subject to him and obey him.

11. *He who is greatest among you.* By this conclusion he shows that he did not, after the manner of the sophists, dispute about words, but, on the contrary, looked to the fact, that no man, through forgetfulness of his rank, might claim more than was proper. He therefore declares that the highest honour in the Church is not government, but service. Whoever keeps himself within this limit, whatever may be the title which he bears, takes nothing away either from God or from Christ; as, on the other hand, it serves no good purpose to take the name of a *servant* for the purpose of cloaking that power which diminishes the authority of Christ as a *Master*. For of what avail is it that the Pope, when he is about to oppress wretched souls by tyrannical laws, begins with styling himself *the servant of servants of God*, but to insult God openly, and to practise shameful mockery on men? Now while Christ does not insist on words, he strictly forbids his followers to aspire or desire to rise any higher than to enjoy brotherly intercourse on an equal footing under the heavenly Father, and charges those who occupy places of honour to conduct themselves as the servants of others. He adds that remarkable statement which has been formerly explained,[1] *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXIII. 13. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you do not enter yourselves, and do not permit those who come to enter. 14. And woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and that under the disguise of a long prayer; therefore you will be the more severely punished. 15. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypo-	XII. 40. Who devour widows' houses, and that under the disguise of a long prayer. These shall receive a severer condemnation.	XI. 52. Woe to you, lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering. XX. 47. Who devour widows' houses, and by way of pre-

[1] *Harmony*, vol ii. p. 165.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
crites! for you compass sea and land to make[1] one proselyte; and when he is made,[2] you make him twice as much the child of hell as yourselves.		tence make long prayers.[3] These shall receive greater condemnation.

He breaks out into still stronger language of condemnation, and he does so not so much on their account, as for the purpose of withdrawing the common people and simple-minded men from their sect.[4] For though we see frequently in Scripture the judgment of God pronounced against the reprobate, so as to render them the more inexcusable, yet in their person the children of God receive a useful warning, not to involve themselves in the snares of the same crimes, but to guard against falling into similar destruction. Certainly, when the scribes, after overturning the worship of God and corrupting the doctrine of godliness, would endure no correction, and with desperate madness, to their own destruction and that of the whole nation, opposed the redemption which was offered to them, it was proper that they should be held up to the hatred and detestation of all. And yet Christ did not so much consider what they deserved, as what would be useful to the uneducated and ignorant; for he intended, towards the close of his life, to leave a solemn testimony, that no man might, except knowingly and willingly, be deceived by persons so base and wicked.

We know how powerfully a foolish reverence for false teachers hinders simple people from getting clear of their erroneous views. The Jews were at that time deeply imbued with false doctrine, and had even imbibed from their earliest years many superstitions. While it was hard and difficult in itself to bring them back to the right path, the chief obstacle lay in the foolish opinion which they had formed about the

[1] "Afin de gaigner un proselyte;"—"in order to gain one proselyte."
[2] "Et quand il est gaigné;"—"and when he is gained."
[3] "Lesquels devorent les maisons des vefues, sous ombre de faire longue oraison;"—"who devour the houses of widows, under the pretence of making a long prayer."
[4] "De suyvre telle maniere de gens;"—"from following that sort of people."

false teachers, whom they regarded as the lawful prelates of the Church, the rulers of divine worship, and the pillars of religion. Besides, they were so strongly fascinated, that they could scarcely be drawn away from those teachers but by violent fear. It is not therefore for the purpose of cursing the scribes that Christ pronounces against them the dreadful vengeance of God, but to withdraw others from their impostures. In like manner, we are compelled at the present day to thunder loudly against the Popish clergy, for no other reason than that those who are tractable, and not quite desperate, may direct their minds to their salvation, and, moved by the judgment of God, may break the deadly snares of superstitions by which they are held captive.

Hence we may infer how cruel is the mildness of those who dislike our vehemence. They are displeased to see harshness and severity used towards the wolves, which are constantly, with open mouth, tearing and devouring the sheep; and yet they see the poor sheep deceived by a vain disguise, freely throwing themselves into the jaws of the wolves, unless the pastor who desires to save them, and endeavours to rescue them from destruction, drive them away with a loud voice. We must therefore follow out the design of Christ, by copying out his example in severe threatenings against wicked despisers, and in boldly exclaiming against them, that those who are capable of being cured may be led by the fear of destruction to withdraw from them. For though we gain nothing by addressing the enemies of the truth, yet they must be summoned to the judgment-seat of God, and others must be warned, that they may know that the same destruction awaits themselves, if they do not speedily withdraw from a wicked league with them.

Matthew XXIII. 13. *You shut up the kingdom of heaven.* Christ pronounces a curse on them, because they pervert their office to the general destruction of the whole people; for since the government of the Church was in their hands, they ought to have been, as it were, *porters* for *the kingdom of heaven.* What purpose is served by religion and holy doctrine but to open heaven to us? For we know that all mankind are

banished from God, and excluded from the inheritance of eternal salvation. Now the doctrine of religion may be said to be the door by which we enter into life, and therefore Scripture says metaphorically, that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are given to pastors, as I have explained more fully[1] under Matthew xvi. 19. And we ought to abide by this definition, which appears still more strongly from the words of Luke, in which Christ reproaches the *lawyers* with *having taken away the key of knowledge*, which means that, though they were the guardians of the Law of God, they deprived the people of the true understanding of it. As, therefore, in the present day, *the keys of the kingdom of heaven* are committed to the custody of pastors, that they may admit believers into eternal life, and exclude unbelievers from all expectation of it, so the priests and scribes anciently under the Law held the same office.

From the word *knowledge* we infer how absurdly the Papists forge false *keys*, as if they possessed some magical power apart from the word of God; for Christ declares that none but those who are ministers of doctrine have the use of *keys*. If it be objected, that the Pharisees, though they were perverse expounders of the Law, still held *the keys*, I reply: Though, in respect of their office, *the keys* were entrusted to them, yet they were suppressed by malice and deceit, so that they no longer retained the use of them. And therefore Christ says, that they *took away*, or *stole* that *key of knowledge*, by which they ought to have opened the gate of *heaven*. In like manner, *heaven* is *shut* by Popery against the wretched people, while the very pastors—or, at least, those who hold that office—prevent them by their tyranny from being opened. If we are not excessively indifferent, we will not willingly enter into a league with wicked tyrants, who cruelly *shut* against us the entrance into life.

14. *For you devour widows' houses.* He now proceeds farther, for he not only accuses them of open crimes which demand hatred and detestation, but even tears away the dis-

[1] *Harmony*, vol. ii. p. 292.

guises of virtues, by which they deceived the common people. If it be objected, that there was no need of reproving those things which could do no harm by their example, we ought to recollect that it was impossible to promote the salvation of those who were held bound by the errors of the scribes, unless they turned away entirely from such persons. This reason, therefore, constrained Christ to expose the vain appearance of virtues, which nourishes superstitions.

And that under the pretence of a long prayer. He says in general that, even when they appear to do what is right, they wickedly abuse the pretence of religion. *Long prayers* contained some evidence of remarkable piety; for the more holy a man is, the more eminently is he devoted to prayer. But Christ says that the *Pharisees* and *scribes* were so impure, that even the chief part of the worship of God was not used by them without committing sin, because constancy in *prayer* was with them a trap for base gain. For they sold their prayers in exactly the same manner as hirelings dispose of their daily labour.[1] Hence also we infer that our Lord does not exactly reprove *long prayers*, as if in itself it were an impropriety—particularly since pastors ought to be eminently devoted to *prayer*—but to condemn this abuse, because a thing laudable in itself was turned to a wicked purpose. For when men aim at gain by means of hired prayers, the more fervent the appearance of what they call *devotion* becomes, the more is the name of God profaned. And as this false conviction had been long and deeply seated in the minds of the common people, on this account Christ employs harsher threatenings; for the pollution of so sacred a thing was no light offence. That it was chiefly *widows* that were imposed on need not excite surprise, because silly women are more prone to superstition, and therefore it has always been customary for base men to make gain of them. Thus Paul brings a charge against the false teachers of his age, that they *lead captive silly women laden with sins,* (2 Tim. iii. 6.)

[1] "Que les mercenaires et ouvriers ont accoustumé de vendre leur labeur, et se loer à la journee;"—"as hirelings and labourers are wont to sell their labour, and to hire themselves out for the day."

15. *For you compass sea and land.* The *scribes* had also acquired celebrity by their zeal in labouring to bring over to the Jewish religion the strangers and uncircumcised. And so, if they had gained any one by their false appearances, or by any other stratagem, they gloried wonderfully over it as an increase of the Church. On this account also they received great applauses from the common people, that by their diligence and ability they brought strangers into the Church of God. Christ declares, on the contrary, that so far is this zeal from deserving applause, that they more and more provoke the vengeance of God, because they bring under heavier condemnation those who devote themselves to their sect. We ought to observe how corrupt their condition at that time was, and what confusion existed in religion; for as it was a holy and excellent work to gain disciples to God, so to allure the Gentiles to the Jewish worship—which was at that time degenerate, and was even full of wicked profanation—was nothing else than to hurry them from Scylla to Charybdis.[1] Besides, by a sacrilegious abuse of the name of God, they drew down upon themselves a heavier condemnation, because their religion allowed them grosser licentiousness of crime. An instance of the same kind may be seen at the present day among the monks; for they are diligent in culling proselytes from every quarter, but those proselytes, from being lascivious and debauched persons, they render altogether devils: for such is the filthiness of those puddles, within which they carry on their revellings, that it would corrupt even the heavenly

[1] "Ce n'estoit autre chose que de les oster d'un danger, pour les precipiter en un plus grand;"—"it was nothing else than to rescue them from one danger to plunge them into a greater." The allusion in the text is to *Scylla*, a rocky promontory on the Italian side of the Strait of Messina, and to *Charybdis*, a whirlpool opposite to it, on the coast of Sicily. Either of them singly would have rendered the navigation formidable, but their vicinity to each other fearfully aggravated the danger; for the very exertions which kept the mariner at a distance from the one unavoidably brought him nearer to the other. This appalling scene meets us frequently in the ancient mythology, in the allusions of poets and orators, and on many other occasions. He who, by avoiding one evil, fell into one still greater, was proverbially said *to have avoided* SCYLLA *and fallen into* CHARYBDIS.—*Ed.*

angels.[1] Yet the monk's habit is a very suitable mantle for concealing enormities of every description.

Matthew.

XXIII. 16. Woe to you, blind guides! who say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but he who shall swear by the gold of the temple is guilty. 17. Fools, and blind! for which is greater, the gold, or the temple which sanctifieth the gold? 18. And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift which is upon it is guilty. 19. Fools, and blind! for which is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifieth the gift? 20. Whosoever therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things that are on it. 21. And whosoever shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth in it. 22. And whosoever shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth upon it.

Matthew XXIII. 16. *Woe to you, blind guides!* As ambition is almost always connected with hypocrisy, so the superstitions of the people are usually encouraged by the covetousness and rapacity of pastors. The world has, indeed, a natural propensity to errors, and even draws down upon itself, as if on purpose, every kind of deceit and imposture; but improper modes of worship come to gain a footing only when they are confirmed by the rulers[2] themselves. And it generally happens, that those who possess authority not only, by their connivance, fawn upon errors, because they perceive that they are a source of gain to them, but even assist in fanning the flame. Thus we see that the superstitions of Popery were heightened by innumerable expedients, while the priests opened their mouths for the prey; and even now they daily contrive many things by which they delude still more the foolish multitude. And when minds have once fallen under the darkening influence of the enchantments of Satan, nothing is so absurd or monstrous as not to be eagerly swallowed.

It was on this account that the Jews had more reverence for *the gold of the temple*, and for the sacred *offerings*, than for *the temple* and *the altar*. But the sacredness of the *offerings* depended on *the temple* and *the altar*, and was only something

[1] "Les anges de Paradis;"—"the angels of Paradise."

[2] "Quand les prelats les conferment;"—"when the prelates confirm them."

inferior and accessory. It may readily be believed that this dream proceeded from the scribes and priests, because it was a scheme well fitted for collecting prey. And this was not only a foolish but a highly dangerous error, because it led the people into ridiculous fancies. There is nothing to which men are more prone than to fall away from the pure worship of God: and therefore, under the covering of this veil, it was easy for Satan to withdraw from the contemplation of God those who were too strongly inclined to foolish imaginations. This is the reason why Christ so severely chastises that error. And yet the Papists were not ashamed to prostitute the sacred name of God to a mockery still more detestable; for they reckon it of more importance to touch a morsel of a stinking carcase, than to peruse the sacred volume of the Old and New Testaments, or even to raise their hands towards heaven. And in this way arises a carnal worship of God, by which the proper fear of God is gradually obliterated.

It is nothing. By this phrase he does not mean that they entirely took away the honour of *the temple*, but he speaks comparatively. For when they represented in extravagant terms the sacredness of *offerings*, the common people were led to entertain such veneration for them, that the majesty of *the temple* and of *the altar* was undervalued, and they reckoned it a less heinous crime to violate it by perjuries than to *swear by the* sacred *offerings* with too little reverence.

18. *And whosoever shall swear by the altar.* Here our Lord does what ought to be done in correcting errors; for he leads us up to the source, and shows, by the very nature of an oath, that *the temple* is far more valuable than the *gifts* which are offered in it. He accordingly assumes this principle, that it is not lawful to swear but by the name of God alone. Hence it follows that, whatever forms men may employ in *swearing*, they must give to God the honour which is due to him; and hence also it follows in what manner and to what extent we are at liberty to *swear by the temple*, namely, because it is the residence or sanctuary of God; and *by heaven*, because there the glory of God shines. God permits himself to be called as a witness and judge, by means of such symbols

of his presence, provided that he retain his authority unimpaired; for to ascribe any Divinity to *heaven* would be detestable idolatry. Now so far as God holds out to us a brighter mirror of his glory in *the temple* than in *offerings*, so much the greater reverence and sacredness is due to the name of *the temple*. We now perceive, therefore, in what sense Christ says that we *swear by him who inhabits heaven*, when we *swear by heaven* itself. His design is, to direct all forms of swearing to their lawful end and object.

Matthew.	Luke.
XXIII. 23. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the more important points of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith. The latter you ought to have done, and not to have omitted the former. 24. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat, but swallow the camel. 25. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outer part of the cup and of the dish, but within they are full of extortion and intemperance. 26. Blind Pharisee, cleanse first what is within the cup and dish, that the outer parts of them also may be made clean. 27. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitened sepulchres, which outwardly indeed appear beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. 28. So you also outwardly indeed appear righteous to men; but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.	XI. 42. But woe to you, Pharisees! for you pay tithe of mint, and rue, and every kind of herb, and pass by judgment and the love of God. The latter you ought to have done, and not to have omitted the former. (*A little after.*) 44. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are as tombs which do not appear, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them.

Christ charges the scribes with a fault which is found in all hypocrites, that they are exceedingly diligent and careful in small matters, but disregard *the principal points of the Law*. This disease has prevailed in almost all ages, and among all nations; so that men have, in most cases, endeavoured to please God by observing with exactness some trivial matters. Finding that they cannot entirely release themselves from all obedience to God, they have recourse to this second remedy of expiating any heinous offences by satisfactions which are of no value. Thus we see that the Papists, while they transgress the chief commandments of God, are extremely zealous in the performance of trifling ceremonies. Hypocrisy of the same kind is now reproved by God in the

scribes, who, while they were very diligent and careful in *paying tithes*, cared little about *the principal points of the Law*. To expose more fully to ridicule their offensive ostentation, he does not say generally that they *paid tithes*, but *tithes of mint, and anise, and* (as Luke has it) *of every kind of herb*, so as to make a display of extraordinary zeal for piety at the least possible expense.

But as Christ makes the chief righteousness of the Law to consist in *mercy, judgment, and faith*, we must, *first*, see what he means by these words; and, *secondly*, why he left out the commandments of the first table, which strictly relate to the worship of God, as if godliness were of less value than the duties of charity. *Judgment* is taken for *equity*, or *uprightness*, the effect of which is, that we render to every man what belongs to him, and that no man deceives or injures others. *Mercy* proceeds farther, and leads a man to endeavour to assist his brethren with his property, to relieve the wretched by advice or by money, to protect those who are unjustly oppressed, and to employ liberally for the common good the means which God has put into his hands. *Faith* is nothing else than strict integrity; not to attempt any thing by cunning, or malice, or deceit, but to cultivate towards all that mutual sincerity which every man wishes to be pursued towards himself. The sum of the Law, therefore, relates to charity.

The word *faith*, I am aware, is interpreted by some persons differently, as including, by synecdoche, the whole worship of God; but Christ, according to his custom, here brings the true test of holiness to brotherly love, and therefore does not refer to the first table. Nor is it inconsistent with this view that, instead of *faith*, Luke uses the expression, *the love of God;* for the design of Christ was, to show what it is that the Lord chiefly requires of us in his Law. It is well known that the Law was divided into two tables, so as to point out, first, what we owe to God, and next, what we owe to men. *Luke* expresses both parts, as if Christ had said, that the chief design of the Law is, that we should love God, and that we should be just and merciful towards our neighbours. *Matthew* satisfies himself with one part; and

there is no absurdity in calling the duties of charity *the principal points of the Law*, since charity itself is pronounced by Paul to be *the perfection of the Law;* as he also says, that *the Law is fulfilled if we love our neighbours*, (Rom. xiii. 10.) And Christ, when formerly interrogated as to the commandments of the Law, quoted none but those which belonged to the second table.

If it be objected, that in this way men are preferred to God, because charity, which is performed towards them, is reckoned more valuable than religion, the answer is easy. Christ does not here contrast the second table of the Law with the first, but, on the contrary, draws from the manner in which the second table is kept the proof whether or not God is truly and sincerely worshipped. As piety lies within the heart, and as God does not dwell amongst us in order to make trial of our *love* towards Him, and does not even need our services, it is easy for hypocrites to lie, and falsely to pretend to *love God*. But the duties of brotherly love fall under the senses, and are placed before the eyes of all, and therefore in them the impudence of hypocrites is better ascertained. Christ, therefore, did not intend to enter into subtle inquiries about the particular parts of righteousness, or their order, but, so far as the ordinary capacity of men allowed, intended simply to show that the Law is kept only when men are just, and kind, and true, towards each other; for thus they testify that they *love* and fear *God*, and give proper and sufficient evidence of sincere piety. Not that it is enough to discharge our duties towards men, if we do not first render to God what we owe to him, but because he who regulates his life according to God's commandment must be a sincere worshipper of God.

And yet the question is not fully answered; for *tithes*, which Christ places inferior to *judgment and mercy*, were a part of divine worship, and some part of them was usually bestowed on the poor, so that *tithes* contained a double sacrifice. I reply: *Tithes* are not simply compared to *alms*, and *faith*, and *judgment*, but the pretended holiness of the scribes is compared with the sincere and pure feeling of charity. Why were they so ready and willing to *pay tithes*, but in

order to pacify God at the least expense and trouble? For they did not regard the principal point; and therefore those light matters, by which they attempted to deceive God and men, ought not to be reckoned among the duties of charity.

Matthew XXIII. 23. *The former you ought to have done.* This is intended to anticipate their calumny; for they might have put an unfavourable interpretation on his discourse, and charged him with setting no value on what the Law of God had enjoined. He therefore acknowledges that whatever God has enjoined ought to be performed, and that no part of it ought to be omitted, but maintains that zeal for the whole Law is no reason why we ought not to insist chiefly on *the principal points.* Hence he infers that they overturn the natural order who employ themselves in the smallest matters, when they ought rather to have begun with *the principal points;* for *tithes* were only a kind of appendage. Christ therefore affirms that he has no intention to lessen the authority even of the smallest commandments, though he recommends and demands due order in keeping the Law. It is therefore our duty to preserve entire the whole Law, which cannot be violated in any part without contempt for its Author; for He who has forbidden us to commit adultery, and to kill, and to steal, has likewise condemned all impure desire. Hence we conclude that all the commandments are so interwoven with each other, that we have no right to detach one of them from the rest. Wherefore it is also written, *Cursed is every one that performeth not all things that are written,* (Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10;) by which words the righteousness of the whole Law, without exception, is enforced. But this reverence, as we have said, does not take away the distinction between the commandments, or the true design of the Law, to which those who truly observe it direct their mind, that they may not merely amuse themselves on the surface.

24. *Blind guides.* This is a proverbial saying, by which he beautifully describes the affected scrupulousness of hypocrites about trifling matters; for they utterly shrink from very small faults, as if a single transgression appeared to them

more revolting than a hundred deaths, and yet they freely permit themselves and others to commit the most heinous crimes. They act as absurdly as if a man were to *strain out* a small crumb of bread, and to swallow a whole loaf.

Straining out[1] *a gnat, and swallowing a camel.* We know that *a gnat* is a very small animal, and that *a camel* is a huge beast. Nothing therefore could be more ridiculous than to *strain out* the wine or the water, so as not to hurt the jaws by swallowing *a gnat*, and yet carelessly to gulp down *a camel*.[2] But it is evident that hypocrites amuse themselves with such distinctions; for while they pass by *judgment, mercy, and faith*, and even tear in pieces the whole Law, they are excessively rigid and severe in matters that are of no great importance; and while in this way they pretend to kiss the feet of God, they proudly spit in his face.

25. *For you cleanse the outer part.* Our Lord follows out the same statement, and employs a figure for reproaching the *scribes* with being eagerly bent on this single object of making a brilliant appearance before men. For by *the outer part of the dish* he metaphorically expresses the outward appearance; as if he had said, "You give yourselves no concern about any *cleanness* but what appears outwardly, which is quite as if one were carefully to wash off the filth of the dish without, but to leave it filthy within." That the expression is meta-

[1] In rendering the words, οἱ διϋλίζοντες τὸν κώνωπα, Campbell resorts to a circumlocution, *who strain your liquor, to avoid swallowing a gnat;* and he adds the following note:—"E. T. *Who strain at a gnat.* I do not understand the import of this expression. Some have thought that it has sprung originally from a mere typographical error of some printer, who has made it *strain at*, instead of *strain out*."—The conjecture mentioned by Campbell is strongly confirmed by the earlier English versions. "Blinde leders; clensenge a gnat, but swolowynge a camel."—(Wiclif, 1380.) "Ye blinde gydes, which strayne out a gnat, and swalowe a cammyll."—(Tyndale, 1534.) "Ye blynde gydes, which strayne out a gnat, and swalowe a camell."—(Cranmer, 1539.) "Ye blynde gydes, which strayne out a gnate, and swalow a cammel."—(Geneva, 1557.) "Blinde guides, that strain a gnat, and swallow a camel."—(Rheims, 1582.) The coincidence of those versions in supporting the true reading is very remarkable, and the substitution of *at* for *out* is more likely to have been the effect of accident than of design.—*Ed.*

[2] "Et cependant ne faire point de difficulté d'engloutir un chameau tout entier;"—"and yet make no difficulty about *swallowing* a whole *camel*."

phorical is evident from the second clause, in which the uncleanness *within* is condemned, because WITHIN *they are full of intemperance and extortion.* He therefore reproves their hypocrisy, in not endeavouring to regulate their life, except before the eyes of men, in order to procure for themselves an empty reputation for holiness. Thus he recalls them to the pure and sincere desire of a holy life. *Cleanse first*, he says, *that which is within ;* for it would be ridiculous to feast your eyes with outward splendour, and yet to drink out of a cup full of dregs, or in other respects filthy.[1]

27. *You are like whitened sepulchres.* This is a different metaphor, but the meaning is the same ; for he compares them to *sepulchres*, which the men of the world ambitiously construct with great beauty and splendour. As a painting or engraving on *sepulchres* draws the eyes of men upon them, while inwardly they contain stinking carcases ; so Christ says that hypocrites deceive by their outward appearance, because they are full of deceit and iniquity. The words of Luke are somewhat different, that they deceive the eyes of men, *like sepulchres, which frequently are not perceived by those who walk over them ;* but it amounts to the same meaning, that, under the garb of pretended holiness, there lurks hidden filth which they cherish in their hearts, like a marble *sepulchre ;* for it wears the aspect of what is beautiful and lovely, but covers a stinking carcase, so as not to be offensive to those who pass by. Hence we infer what I have formerly said, that Christ, with a view to the advantage of the simple and ignorant, tore off the deceitful mask which the scribes held wrapped around them in empty hypocrisy ; for this warning was advantageous to simple persons, that they might quickly withdraw from the jaws of wolves. Yet this passage contains a general doctrine, that the children of God ought to desire to be pure rather than to appear so.

[1] " Plene de lie et de bourbe, ou autrement orde et sale ;"—" full of dregs and of mud, or otherwise nasty and filthy."

MATTHEW.	LUKE.
XXIII. 29. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the sepulchres of the prophets, and embellish the monuments of the righteous, 30. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been their associates in the blood of the prophets. 31. Thus you testify against yourselves, that you are the children of those who killed the prophets. 32. Do you also fill up the measure of your fathers. 33. Serpents, offspring of vipers, how shall you escape the judgment of hell? 34. Therefore, lo, I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them you will slay and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: 35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood which hath been shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Barachiah, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. 36. Verily I say to you, All these things shall come on this generation. 37. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who slayest the prophets, and stonest those who were sent to thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and you would not! 38. Lo, your house is left to you desolate. 39. For I tell you, that you shall never see me henceforth, till you say, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.	XI. 47. Woe to you, for you build the monuments[1] of the prophets, and your fathers slew them.[2] 48. Truly you testify that you approve of the actions of your fathers;[3] for they indeed slew them, and you build their sepulchres. 49. Therefore also the Wisdom of God hath said, I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will slay and persecute: 50. That the blood of all the prophets, which hath been shed since the creation of the world, may be demanded from this generation; 51. From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple. Assuredly I tell you, That it shall be demanded from this generation. XIII. 34. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who slayest the prophets, and stonest those who are sent to thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a bird gathereth its brood under its wings, and you would not! 35. Lo, your house is left to you desolate. But I tell you, that you shall not see me, until the time come when you say Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. XI. 53. And while he was saying these things to them, the lawyers and Pharisees began to press him closely, and cunningly to interrogate him about many things; 54. Laying snares for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, to accuse him.

Matthew XXIII. 29. *For you build the sepulchres of the prophets.* An unfounded opinion is entertained by some, that the *scribes* are here reproved for superstition, in foolishly honouring the deceased *prophets* by splendid *sepulchres*, as the Papists now transfer the honour of God to departed saints,

[1] "Les sepulchres;"—"the sepulchres."

[2] "Lesquels vos peres ont occis;"—"whom your fathers slew."

[3] "Que vous consentez aux œuvres de vos peres;"—"that you consent to the actions of your fathers."

and even are so perverse as to adore their images. They had not yet arrived at such a pitch of blindness and madness, and therefore the design of Christ was different. The scribes endeavoured to gain the favour of the ignorant multitude, and indeed of all the Jews, by this additional hypocrisy, that they cherished with reverence the memory of the *prophets;* for while in this manner they pretended to maintain their doctrine, any one would have supposed that they were faithful imitators of them, and very keen zealots for the worship of God. It was a proposal, therefore, which was likely to prove highly acceptable, to erect monuments for the prophets, because in this way religion might be said to be drawn out of darkness, that it might receive the honour which it deserved. And yet nothing was farther from their design than to restore doctrine, which might appear to have been extinguished by the death of the prophets. But though they were not only averse to the doctrine of the prophets, but most inveterate enemies to it, yet they honoured them—when dead—with sepulchres, as if they had made common cause with them.

It is customary, indeed, with hypocrites thus to honour, after their death, good teachers and holy ministers of God, whom they cannot endure while they are alive. Nor does this arise merely from the common fault, which Horace thus describes: "We hate virtue while it is in safety, but when it has been removed from our eyes, we seek it with envy;"[1] but as the ashes of the dead no longer give annoyance by harsh and severe reproofs, they who are driven to madness by the living voices of those men are not unwilling, by adoring them, to make an empty display of religion. It is a hypocrisy which costs little to profess warm regard for those who are now silent.[2] Thus each of the *prophets*, in his own age, was contemptuously rejected, and wickedly tormented, by the Jews, and, in many instances, cruelly put to death; while

[1] Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.
Lib. III. Carm. XXIV.

[2] "Qui ne peuvent plus crier contre les vices;"—"who can no longer exclaim against vices."

posterity, though not a whit better than their fathers, pretended to venerate their memory, instead of embracing their doctrine; for they too were actuated by equal hostility towards their own teachers.[1] As the world—not venturing altogether to despise God, or at least to rise openly against him—contrives this stratagem of adoring the shadow of God instead of God, so a similar game is played in reference to the prophets.

A proof of this—far too striking—may be seen in Popery. Not satisfied with paying just veneration to Apostles and Martyrs, they render to them divine worship, and think that they cannot go too far in the honours which they heap upon them; and yet, by their rage against believers, they show what sort of respect they would have manifested towards Apostles and Martyrs, if they had been still alive to discharge the same office which they anciently held. For why are they inflamed with such rage against us, but because we desire that doctrine to be received, and to be successful, which the Apostles and Martyrs sealed with their blood? While the holy servants of God valued that doctrine more highly than their own life, would their life have been spared by those who so outrageously persecute the doctrine? Let them adorn the images of the saints as they may think fit, by perfumes, candles, flowers, and every sort of gaudy ornament. If Peter were now alive, they would tear him in pieces; they would stone Paul; and if Christ himself were still in the world, they would burn him with a slow fire.

Our Lord, perceiving that the *scribes* and priests of his age were eager to obtain the applause of the people, on the ground of their being devout worshippers of the *prophets*, reproves them for deceit and mockery, because they not only reject, but even cruelly persecute, the prophets that are now present,[2] and whom God has sent to them. But it is a display of base hypocrisy, and shameful impudence, to desire to

[1] "Car aussi ils ne traittoyent pas mieux ceux qui les enseignoient fidelement que leurs peres avoyent fait aux autres;"—"for they too acted no better towards those who taught them faithfully than their fathers had done to others."

[2] "Et lesquels ils voyent devant leurs yeux tous les jours;"—"and whom they see before their eyes every day."

be thought religious on account of worshipping the dead, while they endeavour to murder the living.

30. *If we had been in the days of our fathers.* Not without good reason did Christ introduce this sentiment; for though he does not blame them for the conduct of their fathers, and does not make it the chief ground of accusation that they are the children of murderers, yet he takes a passing glance of their foolish boasting, in being accustomed to glory in their ancestors, while they were descended from the bloody enemies of God. The appeal may be thus stated: "You look upon the veneration which you pay to the deceased *prophets* as some sort of expiation for the wickedness of your *fathers*. Now then I have this to urge, that it is in vain for you to boast of a sacred ancestry, since you are descended from wicked and ungodly parents. Go now, and screen your crimes by the piety of those whose hands, you acknowledge, were stained with innocent blood. But it is an additional and far more heinous crime, that the sacrilegious fury of the *fathers*, which you condemn by raising sepulchres for the dead, is imitated by you in the murder of the living."

32. *Do you then fill up the measure of your fathers.* He at length concludes that they are not, in this respect, degenerate from their fathers; as if he had said, "It is not now that your nation begins to treat with cruelty the prophets of God; for this is the ancient discipline, this is the custom handed down from the fathers, and, in short, this way of acting is almost natural to you." And yet he does not bid them do what they are doing, to put to death holy teachers, but states figuratively that they have a hereditary right to rise against the servants of God, and that they must be permitted to oppose religion, because in this way they *fill up* what is wanting in the crimes of *their fathers*, and finish the web which they had begun. By these words he not only pronounces themselves to be desperate, and incapable of being brought to a sound mind, but warns simple people that there is no reason to wonder, if the *prophets* of God are ill-treated by the children of murderers.

33. *Offspring of vipers.* After having demonstrated that the *scribes* are not only base enemies of sound doctrine, and wicked corrupters of the worship of God, but likewise deadly plagues of the Church, Christ, being about to close his discourse, kindles into more vehement indignation against them; as it is necessary to shake off by violence the flatteries in which hypocrites indulge, and to drag them, as it were, to the judgment-seat of God, that they may be filled with alarm. And yet Christ did not keep them alone in his eye, but intended to strike terror into the whole people, that all might guard against a similar destruction. How harsh and intolerable this roughness of language must have been to these reverend instructors may easily be inferred from the long period during which they had held a peaceful dominion, so that no one dared to mutter against them. And there can be no doubt that many were displeased with the great freedom and sharpness which Christ used, and, above all, that he was looked upon as immoderate and outrageous in venturing to apply such reproachful epithets to the order of the *scribes;* as many fastidious persons of the present day cannot endure any harsh word to be spoken against the Popish clergy. But as Christ had to deal with the worst of hypocrites, who not only were swelled with proud contempt of God, and intoxicated with careless security, but had captivated the multitude by their enchantments, he found it necessary to exclaim against them with vehemence. He calls them *serpents* both in nature and in habits, and then threatens them with a punishment, which it will be in vain for them to attempt to escape, if they do not speedily repent.

34. *Therefore, lo, I send to you.* Luke introduces it in a still more emphatic manner, *Wherefore also the Wisdom of God hath said;* which some commentators explain thus: "I, who am the eternal *Wisdom of God*, declare this concerning you." But I am more inclined to believe that, according to the ordinary custom of Scripture, God is here represented as speaking in the person of his *Wisdom;* so that the meaning is, "God foretold long ago, by the prophetic Spirit, what would happen with regard to you." This

sentence, I acknowledge, is nowhere to be found literally: but as God denounces the incorrigible obstinacy of that people in many places of Scripture, Christ draws up a kind of summary of them, and by this personification[1] expresses more clearly what was the judgment of God as to the incurable wickedness of that nation. For if those teachers would have no success, it might have appeared strange that Christ should have desired them to weary themselves to no purpose. Men argue thus: "God labours in vain, when he sends his word to the reprobate, who, he knows, will continue obstinate." And hypocrites, as if it were sufficient of itself to have preachers of the heavenly doctrine continually with them, though they show themselves to be disobedient, entertain the conviction that God is reconciled and favourable to them, provided that the outward word be heard amongst them.

Thus the Jews fiercely boasted that, in comparison of other nations, they had always enjoyed the best *prophets* and teachers, and, as if they had deserved so great an honour, they considered this to be an undoubted proof of their own excellence.[2] To put down this foolish boasting, Christ not only affirms that they do not excel other nations on the ground of having received from God distinguished prophets and expounders of *his Wisdom*, but maintains that this ill-requited favour is a greater reproach, and will bring upon them a heavier condemnation, because the purpose of God was different from what they supposed, namely, to render them more inexcusable, and to bring their wicked malice to the highest pitch; as if he had said, "Though prophets have been appointed to you by heaven in close succession, it is idly and foolishly that you claim this as an honour; for God had quite a different object in his secret judgment, which was, to lay open, by an uninterrupted succession of gracious invitations, your wicked obstinacy, and, on your being convicted of it, to involve the children in the same condemnation with the fathers."

[1] "En introduisant la Sapience de Dieu parlant;"—"by introducing the Wisdom of God as speaking."

[2] "Comme un certain tesmoignage qu'ils estoyent gens de bien;"—"as an undoubted proof that they were good people."

With regard to the words, the discourse as related by Matthew is defective, but its meaning must be supplied from the words of Luke. The mention of *scribes and wise men* along with *prophets* tends to magnify the grace of God; by which their ingratitude becomes more apparent, since, though God left nothing undone for their instruction, they made no proficiency. Instead of *wise men* and *scribes*, Luke mentions *apostles*, but the meaning is the same. This passage shows that God does not always bestow salvation on men when he sends his word to them, but that he sometimes intends to have it proclaimed to the reprobate, who, he knows, will continue obstinate, that it may be to them *the savour of death unto death*, (2 Cor. ii. 16.) The word of God, indeed, in itself and by its own nature, brings salvation, and invites all men indiscriminately to the hope of eternal life; but as all are not inwardly drawn, and as God does not pierce the ears of all,—in short, as they are not renewed to repentance or bent to obedience, those who reject the word of God render it, by their unbelief, deadly and destructive.

While God foresees that this will be the result, he purposely sends his prophets to them, that he may involve the reprobate in severer condemnation, as is more fully explained by Isaiah, (vi. 10.) This, I acknowledge, is very far from being agreeable to the reason of the flesh, as we see that unholy despisers of God seize on it as a plausible excuse for barking, that God, like some cruel tyrant, takes pleasure in inflicting more severe punishment on men whom, without any expectation of advantage, he knowingly and willingly hardens more and more. But by such examples God exercises the modesty of believers. Let us maintain such sobriety as to tremble and adore what exceeds our senses. Those who say, that God's foreknowledge does not hinder unbelievers from being saved, foolishly make use of an idle defence for excusing God. I admit that the reprobate, in bringing death upon themselves, have no intention of doing what God foresaw would happen, and therefore that the fault of their perishing cannot be ascribed to His foreknowledge; but I assert that it is improper to employ this sophistry in defending the justice

of God, because it may be immediately objected that it lies with God to make them repent, for the gift of faith and repentance is in his power.

We shall next be met by this objection, What is the reason why God, by a fixed and deliberate purpose, appoints the light of his word to blind men? When they have been devoted to eternal death, why is he not satisfied with their simple ruin? and why does he wish that they should perish twice or three times? There is nothing left for us but to ascribe glory to the *judgments of God*, by exclaiming with Paul, that they are a deep and unfathomable abyss, (Rom. xi. 33.) But it is asked, How does he declare that the prophecies will turn to the destruction of the Jews, while his adoption still continued to be in force towards that nation? I reply, As but a small portion embraced the word by faith for salvation, this passage relates to the greater number or the whole body; as Isaiah, after having predicted the general destruction of the nation, is commanded *to seal the law of God among the disciples*, (Isa. viii. 16.) Let us know then that, wherever the Scripture denounces eternal death against the Jews, it excepts a *remnant*, (Isa. i. 9; Rom. xi. 5;) that is, those in whom the Lord *preserves some seed* on account of his free *election*.

35. *That upon you may come.* He not only takes away from them their false boasting, but shows that they had received *prophets* for a totally different purpose, that no age might be free from the criminality of wicked rebellion; for the pronoun *you* embraces generally the whole nation from its very commencement. If it be objected, that it is not consistent with the judgment of God that punishment should be inflicted on the children for the sins of the parents, the answer is easy. Since they are all involved in a wicked conspiracy, we ought not to think it strange if God, in punishing all without reserve, make the punishment due to the fathers to fall upon the children. Justly then is the whole nation—in whatever age individuals may have lived—called to account, and likewise punished, for this unceasing contempt. For as God, by an uninterrupted course of patience, has unceasingly

contended with the malice of the whole people, so the whole people is justly held guilty of the inflexible obstinacy which continued to the very last; and as every age had conspired to put to death its own *prophets*, so it is right that a general sentence should be pronounced upon them, and that all the murders, which have been perpetrated with one consent, should be avenged on all.

From the blood of Abel. Though *Abel* (Gen. iv. 8) was not slain by the Jews, yet the murder of *Abel* is imputed to them by Christ, because there is an affinity of wickedness between them and Cain; otherwise there would have been no propriety in saying that *righteous blood* had been shed by that nation *from the beginning of the world.* Cain is therefore declared to be the head, and leader, and instigator of the Jewish people, because, ever since they began to slay *prophets*, they succeeded in the room of him whose imitators they were.

To the blood of Zechariah. He does not speak of *Zechariah* as the latest martyr; for the Jews did not then put an end to the murder of the *prophets*, but, on the contrary, their insolence and madness increased from that period; and posterity, who followed them, satiated themselves with the blood which their fathers only tasted. Nor is it because his death was better known, though it is recorded in Scripture. But there is another reason, which, though it deserves attention, has escaped the notice of commentators; in consequence of which they have not only fallen into a mistake, but have likewise involved their readers in a troublesome question. We might suppose it to have arisen from forgetfulness on the part of Christ, that, while he mentions one ancient murder, he passes by a prodigious slaughter which afterwards took place under Manasseh. For until the Jews were carried to Babylon, their wicked persecutions of holy men did not cease; and even while they were still under affliction, we know with what cruelty and rage they pursued Jeremiah, (xxxii. 2.) But our Lord on purpose abstains from reproaching them with recent murders, and selects this murder, which was more ancient—which was also the commencement and source of base licentiousness, and afterwards led them to break out into unbounded cruelty—because it was more suitable to his

design. For I have lately explained, that his leading object was to show that this nation, as it did not desist from impiety, must be held guilty of all the murders which had been perpetrated during a long period. Not only, therefore, does he denounce the punishment of their present cruelty, but says that they must be called to account for the murder of *Zechariah*, as if their own hands had been imbrued in his blood.

There is no probability in the opinion of those who refer this passage to that *Zechariah* who exhorted the people, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, *to build the temple*, (Zech. viii. 9,) and whose prophecies are still in existence. For though the title of the book informs us that he was the *son of Barachiah*, (Zech. i. 1,) yet we nowhere read that he was slain; and it is a forced exposition to say, that he was slain during the period that intervened *between* the building of *the altar and of the temple*. But as to the other *Zechariah*, son of Jehoiada, the sacred history relates what agrees perfectly with this passage; that when true religion had fallen into decay, after the death of his father, through the wicked revolt of the king and of the people, *the Spirit of God came upon him*, to reprove severely the public idolatry, and that on this account he was stoned in the porch of the temple, (2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.) There is no absurdity in supposing that his father Jehoiada received, in token of respect, the surname of *Barachiah*, because, having throughout his whole life defended the true worship, he might justly be pronounced to be the *Blessed of God*. But whether Jehoiada had two names, or whether (as Jerome thinks) there is a mistake in the word, there can be no doubt as to the fact, that Christ refers to that impious stoning of Zechariah which is recorded in 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, 22.

Whom you slew between the temple and the altar. The crime is rendered still more heinous by the circumstance of the place, since they did not revere the sacredness of *the temple*. Here *the temple* is put for the outer court, as in other passages. Near it was the *altar of burnt-offerings*, (1 Kings viii. 64; xviii. 30,) so that the priest offered the sacrifices in presence of the people. It is evident, therefore, that there must have been furious rage, when the sight of *the altar and of the temple*

could not restrain the Jews from profaning that sacred place by a detestable murder.

37. *Jerusalem, Jerusalem.* By these words, Christ shows more clearly what good reason he had for indignation, that *Jerusalem*, which God had chosen to be his sacred, and—as we might say—heavenly abode, not only had shown itself to be unworthy of so great an honour, but, as if it had been *a den of robbers*, (Jer. vii. 11,) had been long accustomed to suck the blood of the prophets. Christ therefore utters a pathetic exclamation at a sight so monstrous, as that the holy city of God should have arrived at such a pitch of madness, that it had long endeavoured to extinguish the saving doctrine of God by shedding *the blood of the prophets.* This is also implied in the repetition of the name, because impiety so monstrous and incredible deserves no ordinary detestation.

Thou who killest the prophets. Christ does not reproach them with merely one or another murder, but says that this custom was so deeply rooted, that the city did not care to slay every one of *the prophets* that were sent to it. For the participle, ἀποκτείνουσα τοὺς προφήτας, (KILLING *the prophets*,) is put for an epithet; as if Christ had said, "Thou who oughtest to have been a faithful guardian of the word of God, a teacher of heavenly wisdom, the light of the world, the fountain of sound doctrine, the seat of divine worship, a pattern of faith and obedience, art a murderer of *the prophets*, so that thou hast acquired a certain habit of sucking their blood."[1] Hence it is evident, that they who had so basely profaned the sanctuary of God deserved every kind of reproaches. Yet Christ had likewise the intention to obviate the scandal which soon after arose, that believers, when they saw him basely put to death at Jerusalem, might not be confounded by the novelty of such an exhibition. For by these words they were already warned that it was not wonderful if a city, which had been accustomed to strangle

[1] "En sorte que tu est toute accoustoumee a humer leur sang, sans en faire conscience;"—"so that thou art quite accustomed to suck their blood, without any scruple of conscience."

or stone *the prophets*, should cruelly put to death its own Redeemer. This shows us what value we should attach to places. There never certainly was a city in the world on which God bestowed such magnificent titles, or such distinguished honour; and yet we see how deeply it was sunk by its ingratitude.

Let the Pope now compare the abode of his robbery with that holy city; what will he find worthy of equal honour? His hired flatterers boast to us that the faith flourished there in ancient times. But admitting this to be true, if it is evident that it has now, by wicked rebellion, revolted from Christ, and is full of innumerable deeds of sacrilege, what folly is it in them to maintain that the honour of primacy belongs to it? Let us, on the contrary, learn from this memorable example, that when any place has been exalted by uncommon instances of the favour of God, and thus has been removed from the ordinary rank, if it degenerate, it will not only be stripped of its ornaments, but will become so much the more hateful and detestable, because it has basely profaned the glory of God by staining the beauty of his favours.

How often would I have gathered together thy children. This is expressive of indignation rather than of compassion. The city itself, indeed, over which he had lately wept, (Luke xix. 41,) is still an object of his compassion; but towards the scribes, who were the authors of its destruction, he uses harshness and severity, as they deserved. And yet he does not spare the rest, who were all guilty of approving and partaking of the same crime, but, including all in the same condemnation, he inveighs chiefly against the leaders themselves, who were the cause of all the evils. We must now observe the vehemence of the discourse. If in *Jerusalem* the grace of God had been merely rejected, there would have been inexcusable ingratitude; but since God attempted to draw the Jews to himself by mild and gentle methods, and gained nothing by such kindness, the criminality of such haughty disdain was far more aggravated. There was likewise added unconquerable obstinacy; for not once and again did God *wish to gather them together*, but, by constant and uninterrupted advances, he sent to them *the prophets*, one after another,

almost all of whom were rejected by the great body of the people.

As a hen collecteth her brood under her wings. We now perceive the reason why Christ, speaking in the person of God, compares himself to *a hen.* It is to inflict deeper disgrace on this wicked nation, which had treated with disdain invitations so gentle, and proceeding from more than maternal kindness. It is an amazing and unparalleled instance of love, that he did not disdain to stoop to those blandishments, by which he might tame rebels into subjection. A reproof nearly similar is employed by Moses, that God, like *an eagle with outspread wings,* (Deut. xxxii. 11,) embraced that people. And though in more than one way God *spread out his wings* to cherish that people, yet this form of expression is applied by Christ, in a peculiar manner, to one class, namely, that *prophets* were sent to *gather together* the wandering and dispersed into the bosom of God. By this he means that, whenever the word of God is exhibited to us, he opens his bosom to us with maternal kindness, and, not satisfied with this, condescends to the humble affection of *a hen* watching over her *chickens.* Hence it follows, that our obstinacy is truly monstrous, if we do not permit him to *gather us together.* And, indeed, if we consider, on the one hand, the dreadful majesty of God, and, on the other, our mean and low condition, we cannot but be ashamed and astonished at such amazing goodness. For what object can God have in view in abasing himself so low on our account? When he compares himself to a mother, he descends very far below his glory; how much more when he takes the form of *a hen,* and deigns to treat us as his *chickens?*

Besides, if this charge was justly brought against the ancient people, who lived under the Law, it is far more applicable to us. For though the statement—which I quoted a little ago from Moses—was always true, and though the complaints which we find in Isaiah are just, that *in vain did God spread out his hands every day to embrace a hard-hearted and rebellious people,* (Isa. lxv. 2,) that, though he *rose up early,* (Jer. vii. 13,) he gained nothing by his incessant care of them; yet now, with far greater familiarity and kindness, he

invites us to himself by his Son. And, therefore, whenever he exhibits to us the doctrine of the Gospel, dreadful vengeance awaits us, if we do not quietly hide ourselves under his wings, by which he is ready to receive and shelter us. Christ teaches us, at the same time, that all enjoy safety and rest who, by the obedience of faith, are *gathered together* to God; because *under his wings* they have an impregnable refuge.[1]

We must attend likewise to the other part of this accusation, that God, notwithstanding the obstinate rebellion of his ancient people, was not all at once so much offended by it, as to lay aside a father's love and a mother's anxiety, since he did not cease to send *prophets* after *prophets* in uninterrupted succession; as in our own day, though he has experienced a marvellous depravity in the world, he still continues to dispense his grace. But these words contain still deeper instruction, namely, that the Jews, as soon as the Lord *gathered them together*, immediately left him. Hence came dispersions so frequent, that they scarcely remained at rest for a single moment *under the wings* of God, as we see in the present day a certain wildness in the world, which has indeed existed in all ages; and, therefore, it is necessary that God should recall to himself those who are wandering and going astray. But this is the crowning point of desperate and final depravity, when men obstinately reject the goodness of God, and refuse to come *under his wings*.

I said formerly that Christ speaks here in the person of God, and my meaning is, that this discourse belongs properly to his eternal Godhead; for he does not now speak of what he began to do since he was *manifested in the flesh*, (1 Tim. iii. 16,) but of the care which he exercised about the salvation of his people from the beginning. Now we know that the Church was governed by God in such a manner that Christ, as the Eternal Wisdom of God, presided over it. In this sense Paul says, not that God the Father was *tempted in*

[1] "Un refuge qui ne peut faillir, et contre lequel il n'y a point de puissance qui ait lieu;"—"a refuge which cannot fail, and against which no power can succeed."

the wilderness, but that *Christ* himself *was tempted*,[1] (1 Cor. x. 9.)

Again, when the sophists seize on this passage, to prove free-will, and to set aside the secret predestination of God, the answer is easy. "God *wills* to gather all men," say they; "and therefore all are at liberty to come, and their *will* does not depend on the election of God." I reply: The *will* of God, which is here mentioned, must be judged from the result. For since by his word he calls all men indiscriminately to salvation, and since the end of preaching is, that all should betake themselves to his guardianship and protection, it may justly be said that he *wills* to gather all to himself. It is not, therefore, the secret purpose of God, but his *will*, which is manifested by the nature of the word, that is here described; for, undoubtedly, whomsoever he efficaciously *wills* to *gather*, he inwardly draws by his Spirit, and does not merely invite by the outward voice of man.

If it be objected, that it is absurd to suppose the existence of two *wills* in God, I reply, we fully believe that his *will* is simple and one; but as our minds do not fathom the deep abyss of secret election, in accommodation to the capacity of our weakness, the *will* of God is exhibited to us in two ways. And I am astonished at the obstinacy of some people, who, when in many passages of Scripture they meet with that figure of speech[2] (*ἀνθρωποπάθεια*) which attributes to God human feelings, take no offence, but in this case alone refuse to admit it. But as I have elsewhere treated this subject fully, that I may not be unnecessarily tedious, I only state briefly that, whenever the doctrine, which is the standard of union,[3] is brought forward, God *wills* to *gather* all, that all who do not come may be inexcusable.

[1] "Mais que Christ luy-mesme a esté tenté au desert par le peuple deliveré d'Egypte;"—"but that Christ himself was tempted in the wilderness by the people that had been delivered from Egypt."

[2] "*Antropopathie;* c'est, quand Dieu s'attribue des affections semblables à celles des hommes, comme quand il dit (Gen. vi. 6) *qu'il s'est repenti d'avoir fait l'homme;* et semblables passages."—"*Anthropopathy;* that is, when God ascribes to himself feelings similar to those of men, as when he says (Gen. vi. 6) that *he repented of having made man;* and similar passages."

[3] "De vraye union;"—"of true union."

And you would not. This may be supposed to refer to the whole nation, as well as to the *scribes;* but I rather interpret it in reference to the latter, by whom the *gathering together*[1] was chiefly prevented. For it was against them that Christ inveighed throughout the whole of the passage; and now, after having addressed *Jerusalem* in the singular number, it appears not without reason that he immediately used the plural number. There is an emphatic contrast between God's *willing* and their *not willing;*[2] for it expresses the diabolical rage of men, who do not hesitate to contradict God.

38. *Lo, your house is left to you desolate.* He threatens the destruction of the temple, and the dissolution of the whole frame of civil government. Though they were disfigured by irreligion, crimes, and every kind of infamy, yet they were so blinded by a foolish confidence in the temple, and its outward service, that they thought that God was bound to them; and this was the shield which they had always at hand: "What? Could God depart from that place which he has chosen to be his only habitation in the world? And since he dwells in the midst of us, we must one day be restored." In short, they looked upon the temple as their invincible fortress, as if they dwelt in the bosom of God. But Christ maintains that it is in vain for them to boast of the presence of God, whom they had driven away by their crimes, and, by calling it *their house*, (*lo*, YOUR HOUSE *is left to you,*) he indirectly intimates to them that it is no longer *the house of God.* The temple had indeed been built on the condition, that at the coming of Christ it would cease to be the abode and residence of Deity; but it would have remained as a remarkable demonstration of the continued grace of God, if its destruction had not been occasioned by the wickedness of the people. It was therefore a dreadful vengeance of God, that the place which Himself

[1] "Ce rassemblement et ceste reunion;"—"this gathering together and this union."

[2] "Quand ildit, *Dieu a voulu, vous ne l'avez point voulu;*"—"when he says, *God would, you would not.*"

had so magnificently adorned was not only forsaken by Him, and ordered to be razed to the foundation, but consigned to the lowest infamy to the end of the world. Let the Romanists now go, and let them proceed, in opposition to the will of God, to build their Tower of Babylon, while they see that the temple of God, which had been built by his authority and at his command, was laid low on account of the crimes of the people.

39. *For I tell you.* He confirms what he had said about the approaching vengeance of God, by saying that the only method of avoiding destruction will be taken from them. For that was *the accepted time, the day of salvation,* (Isa. xlix. 8; 2 Cor. vi. 2,) so long as that very person who had come to be their Redeemer, attested and proclaimed the redemption which he had brought. But at his departure, as at the setting of the sun, the light of life vanished; and therefore this dreadful calamity, which he threatens, must of necessity fall upon them.

Until you say. We come now to inquire what period is denoted by this phrase. Some restrict it to the last day of judgment. Others think that it is a prediction, which was soon afterwards fulfilled, when some of the Jews humbly adored Christ. But I do not approve of either of these interpretations. And I am certainly astonished that learned men should have stumbled at so small an obstacle, by taking great pains to inquire how unbelievers can say concerning Christ, *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord;* for he does not declare what they will be, but what he himself will do. And even the adverb *until* extends no farther than to the time which goes before. Joseph did not know his wife *until* she brought forth Christ, (Matth. i. 25.) By these words Scripture does not mean, that after Christ had been born they lived together as husband and wife, but only shows that Mary, before the birth of her son, was a virgin that had not known man.

So then the true meaning of the present passage, in my opinion, is this: "Hitherto I have lived among you in humility and kindness, and have discharged the office of a teacher; and now, having finished the course of my calling,

I shall depart, and it will not be possible for you any longer to enjoy my presence, but him whom you now despise as a Redeemer and a minister of salvation, you will find to be your Judge." In this manner the passage agrees with the words of Zechariah, *They shall look on him whom they pierced*, (Zech. xii. 10; John xix. 37.) But Christ appears also to make an indirect allusion to their vain hypocrisy, because, as if they ardently longed for the promised salvation, they sung daily the words of the psalm, *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, (Psalm cxviii. 26;) while they treated with scorn the Redeemer that was offered to them. In short, he declares that he will not come to them *until*, trembling at the sight of his dreadful majesty, they shall exclaim—when it is too late—that truly he is the Son of God. And this threatening is addressed to all despisers of the Gospel, more especially to those who falsely profess his name, while they reject his doctrine; for they will one day acknowledge that they cannot escape the hands of him whom they now mock by their hypocritical pretensions. For the same song is now sung by the Papists, who, after all, care nothing about Christ, *until*, armed with vengeance, he ascends his tribunal. We are also reminded, that so long as Christ exhibits himself to us in the name of the Father as the herald of salvation and Mediator, we ought not only to honour him with our lips, but sincerely to wish that he would make us and the whole world subject to himself.

Luke XI. 53. *And while he was saying these things to them.* I have formerly mentioned that the preceding sentences were not inserted by Luke in their proper place. For while he was relating that Christ at a dinner reproved the scribes, he introduced also the latest discourses by which, a little before his death, he reproved their wicked courses; and in like manner, the reproof which we have just now examined is inserted by Luke, in connection with a different narrative. If any one prefer to follow the opinion of those who conjecture that Christ repeated the same discourses on various occasions, I have no great objection. After pronouncing the curses which have been now explained, he concludes by saying that all the scribes became more in-

veterate against Christ, so that they did not cease to *entrap him by ensnaring questions;* which ought to be referred to the conversation held at the table, rather than to his latest discourse. But I have not thought it a matter of great importance to be very exact about the time—a matter which the Evangelist has disregarded.

Mark.	Luke.
XII. 41. And while Jesus was sitting opposite to the treasury, he perceived how the multitude threw money into the treasury; and many rich persons put in much. 42. And a poor widow came, and threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43. And having called his disciples to him, he said, Verily I say to you, that this poor widow hath thrown in more than all who have thrown into the treasury: 44. For they all have thrown in out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty hath thrown in all that she had, all her living.[1]	XXI. 1. And, lifting up his eyes, he saw those rich men who were throwing their gifts into the treasury. 2. And he saw also a certain poor widow throwing into it two mites. 3. And he said, Verily I say to you, that this poor widow hath thrown in more than all: 4. For all these, out of their abundance, have thrown into the offering of God; but she out of her poverty hath thrown in all the living which she had.[2]

Mark XII. 43. *Verily I say to you.* This reply of Christ contains a highly useful doctrine, that whatever men offer to God ought to be estimated not by its apparent value,[3] but only by the feeling of the heart, and that the holy affection of him who, according to his small means, offers to God the little that he has, is more worthy of esteem than that of him who offers a hundred times more *out of his abundance.* In two ways this doctrine is useful, for the poor, who appear not to have the power of doing good, are encouraged by our Lord not to hesitate to express their affection cheerfully out of their slender means; for if they consecrate themselves, their offering, which appears to be mean and worthless, will not be less valuable than if they had presented all the treasures of Crœsus.[4] On the other hand, those who possess greater

[1] "Toute sa substance;"—"all her substance."

[2] "Tout le vivre, *ou bien*, qu'elle avoit;"—"all the living, *or wealth*, that she had."

[3] "Selon le prix qu'il vaut au monde;"—"according to the price at which it is estimated by the world."

[4] "De Crœsus, lequel on dit avoir esté si riche;"—"of Crœsus, who is said to have been so rich."—The allusion is to *Crœsus*, King of Lydia, whose vast wealth was a proverb among the Greeks and Romans.—*Ed.*

abundance, and who have received from God larger communications, are reminded that it is not enough if in the amount of their beneficence they greatly surpass the poor and common people; because it is of less value in the sight of God that a rich man, out of a vast heap, should bestow a moderate sum, than that a poor man, by giving very little, should exhaust his store. *This widow* must have been a person of no ordinary piety, who, rather than come empty into the presence of God, chose to part with *her own living*. And our Lord applauds this sincerity, because, forgetting herself, she wished to testify that she and all that she possessed belonged to God. In like manner, the chief sacrifice which God requires from us is self-denial. As to the *sacred offerings*, it is probable that they were not at that time applied properly, or to lawful purposes; but as the service of the Law was still in force, Christ does not reject them. And certainly the abuses of men could not prevent the sincere worshippers of God from doing what was holy, and in accordance with the command of God, when they offered for sacrifices and other pious uses.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXIV. 1. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple, and his disciples came to him, to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2. And Jesus said to them, Do you not see all these things? Verily I say to you, There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. 3. And while he was sitting on the mountain of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be? and what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the	XIII. 1. And while he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples saith to him, Master, see what stones and what buildings! 2. And Jesus answering saith to him, Seest thou these vast buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. 3. And while he was sitting on the mountain of Olives, opposite to the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately, 4. Tell us, when will these things be, and what is the sign	XXI. 5. And while some were saying concerning the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts, he said, 6. The days will come, when of those things which you see there shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down. 7. And they asked him, saying, Master, when shall these things be? and what is the sign when those things shall begin to take place? 8. And he said, Take heed that you be not deceived; for many will come in my name,

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
world? 4. And Jesus answering said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5. For many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and will deceive many. 6. For you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you be not troubled; for all these things must happen, but the end is not yet. 7. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be pestilences, and famines, and earthquakes in various places. 8. But all these things are the beginnings of sorrows.	when all these things shall be accomplished? 5. And Jesus answering began to say to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 6. For many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and will deceive many. 7. And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be not troubled; for these things must be, but the end is not yet. 8. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be earthquakes in various places. These things are the beginnings of sorrows.	saying, It is I; and the time approaches: do not therefore follow them. 9. But when you shall hear of wars and seditions, be not terrified: for these things must first take place; but the end is not immediately.[1] 10. Then he said to them, Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; 11. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines, and pestilences; and there will be frightful appearances and great signs from heaven.

Matthew XXIV. 1. *And Jesus went out.* The disciples undoubtedly perceived that Christ was paying, as it were, his last adieu to the temple. It remained, therefore, that he should erect a new *temple* far more magnificent, and that he should produce a more flourishing condition of the kingdom, as had been foretold by the Prophets; for he had nothing to do with that *temple*, in which every thing was opposed to him. But again, the disciples could not believe that the magnificent splendour of the *temple* would give way to Christ. And it ought to be carefully observed that, owing to the prodigious costliness of *the temple*, their eyes were so dazzled by the splendour of its present aspect, that they could scarcely entertain the hope that the kingdom of Christ would arise. They do not, indeed, in express terms acknowledge their hesitation, but they tacitly throw out a suggestion of it, when they allege, in opposition to Christ, the mass of *stones* which must be got out of the way, and which must indeed be utterly laid low if he intended to reign. Many

[1] "La fin ne sera point si tost;"—"the end will not be so soon."

simple persons of our own day are carried away by a similar admiration of Popery; for, perceiving it to be supported by very great wealth and by immense power, they are filled with absolute amazement, so as to despise a Church of mean and slovenly aspect. Many even think that we are mad in labouring to effect its destruction, as if this were nothing less than an attempt to draw down the sun out of heaven. And yet, there is no reason to wonder that a spectacle so imposing held the disciples of Christ in astonishment; for how great expense that building cost Herod, may be concluded from the single fact, that he kept ten thousand workmen employed on it for eight successive years. Nor is it without reason that they admire the *stones* which, Josephus tells us, were superlatively beautiful, and were fifteen[1] cubits in length, twelve in height, and eight in breadth. Besides, so great was the reverence entertained for *the temple* even in remote districts, that scarcely any person would venture to suppose that it could ever be destroyed.

2. *Verily I say to you.* As the vast size and wealth of *the temple*, like a veil hung before the eyes of the disciples, did not permit them to elevate their faith to the true reign of Christ, which was still future, so he affirms with an oath, that those things which occupy their attention will quickly perish. This prediction of the destruction of the temple, therefore, opened up a path for the ignorant and weak.[2] Now, though it was advantageous that *the temple* should be destroyed, lest its services and shadows might exercise an undue influence on the Jews, who were already too much attached to earthly elements, yet the chief reason was, that God determined, by this dreadful example, to take vengeance on that nation, for having rejected his Son, and despised the grace which was brought by him. And, therefore, this threatening must have intimidated the disciples from taking part with a rebellious people; as the punishments which

[1] Instead of *fifteen*, Josephus states the length of each of the stones to have been *twenty-five* cubits, (Ant. XV. xi. 3.)—*Ed.*

[2] "Afin qu'ils ne trouvassent aucun destourbier de ce costé-la;"—"that they might not find any impediment in that respect."

Scripture denounces against the wicked ought now to deter us from those crimes which provoke the wrath of God. Every thing that it tells us, even about the fading and transitory aspect of the world, ought to correct the vanity of our senses, which too eagerly follow pomp, and luxury, and pleasure. But more especially, what it declares respecting the fearful destruction of Antichrist and his followers, ought to remove every obstacle which hinders us from pursuing the right course of faith.

3. *And while he was sitting.* Mark mentions four disciples, *Peter, James, John, and Andrew.* But neither he nor Luke states the matter so fully as Matthew; for they only say that the disciples inquired about the time of the destruction of *the temple*, and—as it was a thing difficult to be believed—what outward *sign* of it God would give from heaven. Matthew tells us that they inquired about the time *of Christ's coming, and of the end of the world.* But it must be observed that, having believed from their infancy that the temple would stand till the end of time, and having this opinion deeply rooted in their minds, they did not suppose that, while the building *of the world* stood, the *temple* could fall to ruins. Accordingly, as soon as Christ said that *the temple* would be destroyed, their thoughts immediately turned to *the end of the world;* and—as one error leads to another—having been convinced that, as soon as the reign of Christ should commence, they would be in every respect happy, they leave warfare out of the account, and fly all at once to a triumph. They associate *the coming of Christ* and *the end of the world* as things inseparable from each other; and by *the end of the world* they mean the restoration of all things, so that nothing may be wanting to complete the happiness of the godly.

We now perceive that they leap at once to various questions, because they had given way to these foolish imaginations, that *the temple* could not fall without shaking the whole world; that the termination of the shadows of the Law, and of the whole world, would be the same; that it would be immediately followed by the exhibition of the glory of Christ's kingdom, which would make the children of God

perfectly happy; that a visible renovation of the world was at hand, which would instantly bring order out of a state of confusion. But above all, a foolish hope which they entertained, as to the immediate reign of Christ, drove them to hasten to the attainment of happiness and rest, without attending to the means. Just as, when they see that Christ is risen from the dead, (Acts i. 6,) they rush forward to grasp at that happiness, which is laid up for us in heaven, and which must be attained through faith and patience.

Now though our condition is different, because we have not been educated among the shadows of the Law, so as to be infatuated by that superstition of an earthly kingdom of Christ, yet scarcely one person in a hundred is to be found who does not labour under a very similar disease. For since all men naturally shrink from annoyances, combats, and every kind of cross, the dislike of these things urges them, without moderation and without hope, to rush forward unseasonably to the fruit of hope. Thus no man wishes to sow the seed, but all wish to reap the harvest before the season arrives. To return to *the disciples*, they had indeed formed in their minds some good seed of faith, but they do not wait till it arrive at maturity; and holding, at the same time, erroneous views, they confound the perfection of Christ's reign with the commencement of it, and wish to enjoy on earth what they ought to seek for in heaven.

4. *And Jesus answering said to them.* They received an answer very different from what they had expected; for whereas they were eager for a triumph, as if they had already finished their warfare, Christ exhorts them to long patience. As if he had said, "You wish to seize the prize at the very outset, but you must first finish the course. You would draw down to earth the kingdom of God, which no man can obtain till he ascend to heaven." Now while this chapter contains admonitions highly useful for regulating the course of our life, we see that, by a wonderful purpose of God, the mistake into which the apostles fell is made to turn to our advantage. The amount of the present instruction is, that the preaching of the Gospel is like sowing the seed, and therefore we ought

to wait patiently for the time of reaping; and that it arises from improper delicacy or effeminacy, if we lose courage on account of the frost, or snow, or clouds of winter or other unpleasant seasons.

Take heed lest any man deceive you. There are two charges which Christ expressly gives to the disciples, to beware of false teachers, and not to be terrified by scandals. By these words he gives warning that his Church, so long as its pilgrimage in the world shall last, will be exposed to these evils. But they might be apt to think that this was inconsistent, since the prophets gave a widely different description of the future reign of Christ. Isaiah predicts that *all* will then be *taught of God*, (liv. 13.) The words of God are: *I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams*, (ii. 28.) A still more abundant light of understanding is promised by Jeremiah. *No longer shall any man teach his neighbour, nor a man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest*, (xxxi. 34.) And, therefore, we need not wonder if the Jews expected, that when *the Sun of righteousness had arisen*, as Malachi (iv. 2) had predicted, they would be entirely free from every cloud of error. Hence, also, the woman of Samaria said, *When the Messiah cometh, he will teach us all things*, (John iv. 25.) Now we know what splendid promises of peace, righteousness, joy, and abundance of all blessings, are to be found everywhere in Scripture. We need not, therefore, wonder if they expected that, at the coming of Christ, they would be delivered from commotions of war, from extortions and every kind of injustice, and, in short, from famine and pestilence.

But Christ warns them, that false teachers will henceforth give no less annoyance to the godly than false prophets gave to the ancient people; and that disturbances will be not less frequent under the Gospel than they formerly were under the Law. Not that those prophecies which I have just mentioned will fail to be accomplished, but because the full accomplishment of them does not immediately appear in one day; for it is enough that believers now obtain a taste of

those blessings, so as to cherish the hope of the full enjoyment of them at a future period. And, therefore, they were greatly mistaken, who wished to have, at the commencement of the Gospel, an immediate and perfect exhibition of those things which we see accomplished from day to day. Besides, that happiness which the prophets ascribe to the reign of Christ, though it cannot be altogether annihilated by the depravity of man, is retarded or delayed by it. It is true that the Lord, in contending with the malice of men, opens up a way for his blessings through every obstacle; and, indeed, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that what is founded on the undeserved goodness of God, and does not depend on the will of man, should be set aside through their fault.

Yet, that they may receive some punishment for their ingratitude, he drops upon them in small measure his favours, which would otherwise flow on them in the richest abundance. Hence arises a labyrinth of evils, through which believers wander all their life, though they are pursuing the straight road to salvation, having Christ for their guide, who holds out to them the torch of his Gospel. Hence arises a multitude of combats, so that they have a hard warfare, though there is no danger of their being vanquished. Hence arise disturbances so numerous and so sudden, that they are kept in perpetual uneasiness, though, resting on Christ, they remain firm to the end. And since Christ enjoins his disciples to beware of impostures, let us know that the means of defence will not be wanting, provided that they are not wanting to themselves.[1] And therefore, whatever arts Satan may employ, let us entertain no doubt that we shall be safe from them, if every one of us keep diligent watch on his own station.

5. *For many shall come in my name.* He does not as yet speak generally of false and perverse doctrines, but refers to one class which was a sort of introduction to all errors, by which Satan has attempted, in various ways, to corrupt the pure doctrine of the Gospel. For shortly after Christ's

[1] "Pourveu qu'ils soyent songneux à en user;"—"provided that they are careful to use them."

resurrection, there arose impostors, every one of whom professed to be *the Christ.* And as the true Redeemer had not only been removed from the world, but oppressed by the ignominy of the cross, and yet the minds of all were excited by the hope and inflamed with the desire of redemption, those men had in their power a plausible opportunity of deceiving. Nor can it be doubted, that God permitted such reveries to impose on the Jews, who had so basely rejected his Son. Though those mad attempts speedily disappeared, yet God determined that disturbances of this kind should arise among the Jews; first, that they might be exposed to infamy and hatred; secondly, that they might altogether abandon the hope of salvation; and, lastly, that having been so frequently disappointed, they might rush to their destruction with brutal stupidity. For when the world turned away from the Son of God, to whom it belonged to collect them into holy union, it was right that it should be driven hither and thither by tempests; and by the same vengeance of God it was brought about, that more were carried away by a foolish credulity, than were brought by a right faith to obey God. This circumstance, too, was expressly stated by Christ, that believers might not faint at perceiving the crowd of madmen; for we know how prone we are to follow a multitude, especially when we are few in number.

6. *For you will hear of wars and rumours of wars.* He describes here those commotions only which arose in Judea, for we shall find him soon afterwards saying that the flame will spread much wider. As he had formerly enjoined them to *beware lest any man deceived them,* so now he bids them meet with courage *rumours of wars and wars themselves;* for they would be in danger of giving way when surrounded by calamities, especially if they had promised to themselves ease and pleasure.

For all these things must take place. He adds this, not for the purpose of assigning a reason, but of warning them that none of *these things* happened accidentally, or without the providence of God, that they may not uselessly kick against the spur; for nothing has a more powerful efficacy to bring

us into subjection, than when we acknowledge that those things which appear to be confused are regulated by the good pleasure of God. True, indeed, God himself never wants proper causes and the best reasons for allowing the world to be disturbed; but as believers ought to acquiesce in his mere good pleasure, Christ reckoned it enough to exhort the disciples to prepare their minds for endurance, and to remain firm, because such is the will of God.

But the end is not yet. He now states in plainer terms the threatening which I have already mentioned, that those events which were in themselves truly distressing would be only a sort of preparation for greater calamities; because, when the flame of war has been kindled in Judea, it will spread more widely; for ever since the doctrine of the Gospel was published, a similar ingratitude prevailing among other nations has aroused the wrath of God against them. Hence it happened that, having broken the bond of peace with God, they tore themselves by mutual contentions; having refused to obey the government of God, they yielded to the violence of their enemies; not having permitted themselves to be reconciled to God, they broke out into quarrels with one another; in short, having shut themselves out from the heavenly salvation, they raged against each other, and filled the earth with murders. Knowing how obstinate the malice of the world would be, he again adds,

8. *But all these things are the beginnings of sorrows.* Not that believers, who always have abundant consolations in calamities, should consume themselves with grief, but that they should lay their account with a long exercise of patience. Luke adds likewise *earthquakes, and signs from heaven*, with respect to which, though we have no authentic history of them, yet it is enough that they were predicted by Christ. The reader will find the rest in Josephus, (Wars of the Jews, VI. v. 3.)

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXIV. 9. Then will they deliver you up to be afflicted, and will kill you; and you will be hated by all nations on account of my name. 10. And then will many be offended, and will deliver up one another, and will hate one another. 11. And many false prophets will arise, and will deceive many. 12. And because iniquity will abound, the love of many will be cooled. 13. But he who shall persevere to the end will be saved. 14. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world for a testimony to all nations; and then will the end come.	XIII. 9. But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils and synagogues; you will be scourged, and will be brought before rulers and kings on my account, for a testimony to them. 10. And the gospel must first be preached among all nations. 11. And when they shall lead you away to deliver you up, do not think beforehand what you shall say, nor premeditate, but whatever shall be given to you at that hour, speak; for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12. And the brother will deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son; and the children will rise up against their parents, and will cause them to be put to death. 13. And you will be hated by all men on account of my name. But he that still endures to the end will be saved.	XXI. 12. But before all these things they will lay hands upon you, and will persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, and dragging you before kings and rulers on account of my name. 13. But it will happen[1] to you for a testimony. 14. Settle it therefore in your hearts, that you must not premeditate your defence.[2] 15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all who oppose you will not be able to contradict or oppose. 16. And you will also be delivered up by parents, and brothers, and relatives, and friends; and some of you they will put to death. 17. And you will be hated by all on account of my name. 18. And not a hair of your head will be lost. 19. In patience possess your souls.[3]

Matthew XXIV. 9. *Then will they deliver you up to be afflicted.* Christ now foretells to the disciples another kind of temptation, by which, in addition to ordinary afflictions, their faith must be tried; and that is, that they *will be hated* and detested *by the whole world.* It is painful and distressing enough in itself that the children of God should be *afflicted* in such a manner as not to be distinguished from the reprobate and the despisers of God, and should be subjected to the

[1] "Et cela vous adviendra en (*ou, servira pour*) tesmoignage;"—"and this will happen to you as a testimony, *or, will serve for* a testimony."

[2] "Mettez donc en vos cœurs de ne premediter comment vous respondrez;"—"settle then in your hearts not to premeditate how you shall answer."

[3] "Possedez vos ames par vostre patience;"—"possess your souls by your patience."

same punishments which those men endure on account of their crimes; and it appears to be still more unjust that they should be severely oppressed by grievous calamities from which the ungodly are exempted. But as wheat, after having been beaten by the flail along with the chaff, is pressed down and bruised by the millstone, so God not only *afflicts* his children in common with the ungodly, but subdues them by the cross even beyond others, so that we might be apt to think them more unhappy than the rest of mankind.

But Christ treats here strictly of the *afflictions* which the disciples had to endure on account of the gospel. For, though what Paul says is true, that those whom God hath elected are likewise appointed by him to bear the cross, *that they may be conformed to the image of his Son*, (Rom. viii. 29,) yet he does not distinguish all by this special mark of enduring persecution from the enemies of the gospel. It is of this species of the cross that Christ now speaks, when it becomes necessary that believers should incur the hatred, meet the reproaches, and provoke the fury, of the ungodly for the testimony of the gospel. For he intended to warn his disciples that the doctrine of the gospel, of which they were to be witnesses and messengers, would never be pleasant or agreeable to the world, as he had formerly explained to them. He foretells not only that they will have to contend with a few enemies, but that, wherever they come, all nations will oppose them.

But it was monstrous and incredible, and was fitted to astonish and shake even the strongest minds, that the name of the Son of God should be so infamous and hateful, that all who professed it would be everywhere disliked. Accordingly, the words of Mark are, *take heed to yourselves*. By this expression he points out the end and use of the warning, which is, that they ought to be prepared for endurance, lest, through want of caution, they might be overwhelmed by temptation. The same Mark adds, that *this will be for a testimony to kings and rulers*, when the disciples of Christ shall be brought before their tribunal. Luke expresses it a little differently, *this will happen to you for a testimony*, but the sense is quite the same; for Christ means that his gospel will be so much the

more fully attested, when they have defended it at the risk of their lives.

If the apostles had only given their attention to preaching the gospel, and had not stood so firmly in defending it against the furious attacks of enemies, the confirmation of it would not have been so complete. But when they did not hesitate to expose their lives, and were not driven from their purpose by any terrors of death, their unshaken constancy made it manifest, how firmly they were convinced of the goodness of their cause. It was therefore an authentic seal of the gospel, when the apostles advanced without terror to the tribunals of kings, and there made an open profession of the name of Christ. Accordingly, Peter calls himself *a witness of the sufferings of Christ*, (1 Pet. v. 1,) whose badges he wore; and Paul boasts that he was *placed for the defence of the gospel*, (Philip. i. 17.) This is eminently worthy of attention, that those on whom God bestows so great an honour, as to make them defenders of his truth, may not through base treachery fall from the faith.

Mark XIII. 11. *Neither premeditate.* This sentence, as well as the one which immediately follows, we have explained[1] under Matthew x. 19. Our Lord's design in these words is, to relieve the disciples from that anxiety which interferes with the cheerful discharge of our duty, when we doubt our inability to sustain the burden. Not that he wishes us to fall asleep in indolent security, for nothing is more advantageous than to have such a consciousness of our weakness as produces humility and excites to prayer. But Christ advises us to cast all our cares into the bosom of our Father, so that, relying on his promised aid, we may pursue our course with cheerfulness. The promise is stated in different words by Luke; not that Christ will deliver his people from death, (for this must not always be expected,) but that *he will give them a mouth and wisdom*, to confound their adversaries. Now though Christ supplies them both with presence of mind and with ability to speak, yet I look upon these two

[1] *Harmony*, vol. i. p. 453.

words as connected by that figure of speech which is called *hypallage;* as if Christ had promised that he would guide their tongues, so as to enable them to make a wise and suitable reply.

He adds, that this *wisdom* will be victorious against all their enemies, because *they will not be able to contradict, or to oppose it.* Not that their impudence will yield the palm to truth, but because that truth, which they in vain strive to oppose, will triumph over their mad presumption. Would that all who are called upon to make a confession of their faith would rely on that assurance; for the power and majesty of the Spirit would be displayed in a different manner for overthrowing the ministers of Satan. Now that we are partly carried away by our own feelings, and, swelled with pride, rush on heedlessly, or advance farther than is proper, and partly confine ourselves within the limits of improper timidity, sad experience shows that we are deprived of the grace of God and the assistance of the Spirit. As Christ affirms, according to Matthew and Mark, that *it is the Spirit of the Father that speaketh in us*, (Matth. x. 10; Mark xiii. 11,) and here declares that *He will give a mouth*, we infer that it is His prerogative to fortify us *by the Spirit.*

Luke XXI. 19. *In your patience.* Here Christ enjoins on his followers a different method of defending their life from what is dictated by carnal reason. For naturally every man desires to place his life in safety; we collect from every quarter those aids which we think will be best, and avoid all danger; and, in short, we do not think that we are alive, if we are not properly defended. But Christ prescribes to us this defence of our life, that we should be always exposed to death, and walk *through fire, and water, and sword*, (Ps. lxvi. 12.) And, indeed, no man will commit his soul into the hands of God in a right manner, unless he have learned to live from day to day constantly prepared to die.[1] In a word, Christ orders us *to possess our*

[1] "Sinon qu'estant tousjours prest a mourir, il ait apprins de vivre comme le jour vient, sans faire son conte de demeurer jusques au lendemain;"—"except that, being always ready to die, he has learned to live, as the day comes, without reckoning on being alive till to-morrow."

life both under the cross, and amidst the constant terrors of death.

Matthew XXIV. 10. *Then will many be offended.* He now enumerates the temptations which will arise from bad examples. Now this is an exceedingly violent temptation, and difficult to overcome; for Christ is to many *a stone of offence,* (1 Pet. ii. 8,) on which some dash themselves, or by meeting which some are thrown back, and others fall away. In this expression Christ appears to me to include many kinds of troubles; for not only do they that had entered into the right course fall away, but many are exasperated against Christ; others, forgetful of moderation and justice, break out into rage; others grow profane, and lose every feeling of piety; and others, amidst the confusion which prevails, take upon themselves a liberty to commit crimes.

11. *And many false prophets will arise.* This warning differs from the former, in which Christ foretold that *many would come in his name.* For there he spoke only of impostors, who, shortly after the commencement of the Gospel, gave out that they were *the Christ;* but now he threatens that in all ages false teachers will arise, to corrupt sound doctrine, as Peter tells us (2 Pet. ii. 1) that the Church will be no less exposed to this evil under the Gospel than it anciently was under the Law. There is therefore no reason why error, and certain impostures of the devil and corruptions of piety, should strike pious minds with dismay; since no man is properly founded on Christ, who has not learned that we must stand firm against such attacks; for this is the undoubted trial of our faith, when it is in no degree shaken by the false doctrines which arise. Nor does he only say that *false prophets will come,* but likewise that they will be so crafty as to *deceive* and draw away sects after them.[1] No ordinary caution is necessary here; for the multitude of those who are going astray is like a violent tempest, which compels us to leave the course, if we are not firmly

[1] "En sorte qu'ils auront des disciples, et feront des sectes;"—"so that they will have disciples, and will form sects."

fixed on God. On this subject something was said but lately.

12. *Because iniquity will abound.* How far and wide this evil extends every person ought to know, but there are very few who observe it. For in consequence of the superior clearness with which the light of the gospel discovers the malice of men, even good and properly regulated minds *grow cool,* and almost lose the desire to exercise benevolence. Each of them reasons thus with himself, that the duties which they perform to one person, or to another, are thrown away, because experience and daily practice show that almost all are ungrateful, or treacherous, or wicked. This is unquestionably a weighty and dangerous temptation; for what could be more unreasonable than to approve of a doctrine, by which the desire of doing good, and the vigour of charity, appear to be diminished? And yet when the gospel makes its appearance, charity, which ought to kindle the hearts of all men with its warmth, rather *grows cool.* But we must observe the source of this evil, which Christ points out, namely, that many lose courage, because through their weakness they are unable to stem the flood of iniquity which flows on every hand. Christ requires from his followers, on the other hand, such courage as to persist in striving against it; as Paul also enjoins us *not to be weary* of performing deeds of kindness and beneficence, (2 Thess. iii. 13.) Although, then, the charity of many, overwhelmed by the mass of iniquities, should give way, Christ warns believers that they must surmount this obstacle, lest, overcome by bad examples, they apostatize. And therefore he repeats the statement, that no man can be saved, *unless he strive lawfully,* (2 Tim. ii. 5,) so as to *persevere to the end.*

14. *And the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world.* Our Lord, having delivered a discourse which gave no small occasion for sorrow, seasonably adds this consolation, to raise up minds that were cast down, or to uphold those which were falling. Whatever may be the contrivances of Satan, and how numerous soever may be the

multitudes which he carries away, yet *the gospel* will maintain its ground till it be spread *through the whole world.* This might indeed appear to be incredible; but it was the duty of the apostles, relying on this testimony of their Master, to cherish hope against hope, and, in the meantime, to strive vigorously to discharge their office. As to the objection brought by some, that to this day not even the slightest report concerning Christ has reached the *Antipodes* and other very distant nations, this difficulty may be speedily resolved; for Christ does not absolutely refer to every portion of the world, and does not fix a particular time, but only affirms that *the gospel*—which, all would have thought, was immediately to be banished from Judea, its native habitation—would be spread to the farthest bounds of the world before the day of his last coming.

For a testimony to all nations. He describes this to be the end of preaching; for although *God has never left himself* (ἀμάρτυρον) *without witness,* (Acts xiv. 17,) and although in a special manner he testified to the Jews concerning himself, yet it was *a testimony* remarkable beyond all others when he revealed himself in Christ; and therefore Paul says, that he was *manifested in due time,* (1 Tim. ii. 6,) because this was the proper season for calling the whole world to God. Let us, therefore, learn that, wherever the gospel is preached, it is as if God himself came into the midst of us, and solemnly and expressly besought us, that we may not wander in darkness, as if we knew not where to go, and that those who refuse to obey may be rendered inexcusable.

And then will the end come. This is improperly restricted by some to the destruction of the temple, and the abolition of the service of the Law; for it ought to be understood as referring to *the end* and renovation of the world. Those two things having been blended by the disciples, as if the temple could not be overthrown without the destruction of *the whole world,* Christ, in replying to the whole question which had been put to him, reminded them that a long and melancholy succession of calamities was at hand, and that they must not hasten to seize the prize, before they had passed through many contests and dangers. In this manner,

therefore, we ought to explain this latter clause: "The end of the world will not come before I have tried my Church, for a long period, by severe and painful temptations;" for it is contrasted with the false imagination which the apostles had formed in their minds. Hence, too, we ought to learn that no particular time is here fixed, as if the last day were to follow in immediate succession those events which were just now foretold; for the believers long ago experienced the fulfilment of those predictions which we have now examined, and yet Christ did not immediately appear. But Christ had no other design than to restrain the apostles, who were disposed to fly with excessive eagerness to the possession of the heavenly glory, and to show them the necessity of patience; as if he had said, that redemption was not so close at hand as they had imagined it to be, but that they must pass through long windings.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXIV. 15. When therefore you shall see the abomination of desolation, which is described by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (let him that readeth understand,) 16. Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17. Let not him who is on the house-top go down to carry any thing out of his house; 18. And let not him who is in the field return to carry away his clothes. 19. But woe to the women with child, and to them that give suck in those days. 20. And pray that your flight may not be in the winter, nor on the sabbath.[1] 21. For there will then be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world till this time, nor will be. 22. And unless	XIII. 14. But when you shall see the abomination of desolation, which is described by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains; 15. And let not him who is on the house-top go down into the house, or enter into it, to carry away any thing out of his house. 16. And let not him that is in the field return back to bring away his cloak. 17. But woe to the women with child, and to them that give suck in those days. 18. But pray that your	XXI. 20. And when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is at hand. 21. Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them who are in the midst of it withdraw; and let not those who are in the fields enter into it. 22. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23. But woe to women with child, and to them that give suck in those days; for there shall be great tribulation on the earth, and wrath on this people. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all

[1] "*Ny au* jour du *Sabbath*;"—"*nor on the Sabbath*-day."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved, but on account of the elect those days shall be shortened. 23. If any one shall then say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe it. 24. For false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall perform great signs and wonders, so that even the elect (if it were possible) will be led into error. 25. Lo, I have foretold it to you. 26. If then they shall say to you, Lo, he is in the desert, go not out; lo, he is in the secret chamber, do not believe it. 27. For as the lightning goeth out of the east, and shineth even to the west, so shall also be the coming of the Son of man. 28. For wherever the carcase is, there will the eagles also be gathered together.	flight may not be in the winter. 19. For in those days there shall be tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the creation which God created till this time, nor will be. 20. And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved, but on account of the elect whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. 21. And if any one shall then say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, there, do not believe it. 22. For false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall perform signs and wonders to deceive (if it were possible) even the elect. 23. But take heed; lo, I have foretold to you all things.	nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. XVII. 22. And he said to the disciples, The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it. 23. And they will say to you, Lo, he is here, or, lo, he is there; do not go, nor follow them.[1] 24. For as the lightning, flashing from one side which is under heaven, shineth to the other side which is under heaven, so shall be also the Son of man in his day. 25. But he must first suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation.

Matthew XXIV. 15. *When you shall see the abomination of desolation.* Because the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, together with the overthrow of the whole Jewish government, was (as we have already said) a thing incredible, and because it might be thought strange, that the disciples could not be saved without being torn from that nation, to which had been committed *the adoption and the covenant* (Rom. ix. 4) of eternal salvation, Christ confirms both by the testimony of *Daniel.* As if he had said, That you may not be too strongly attached to the temple and to the ceremonies of the Law, God has limited them to a fixed time,[2] and has long ago declared, that when the Redeemer

[1] "Mais n'y allez point, et ne les suyvez point;"—"but go not there, and do not follow them."

[2] "Dieu a limité certain temps auquel ces choses prendrent fin;"—"God has limited a certain time when those things shall be terminated."

should come, sacrifices would cease; and that it may not give you uneasiness to be cut off from your own nation, God has also forewarned his people, that in due time it would be rejected. Such a prediction was not only well adapted for removing ground of offence, but likewise for animating the minds of the godly, that amidst the sorest calamities—knowing that God was looking upon them, and was taking care of their salvation—they might betake themselves to the sacred anchor, where, amidst the most dreadful heavings of the billows, their condition would be firm and secure.

But before I proceed farther, I must examine the passage which is quoted by Christ. Those commentators are, I think, mistaken, who think that this quotation is made from the ninth chapter of the Book of *Daniel*.[1] For there we do not literally find the words, *abomination of desolation;* and it is certain that the angel does not there speak of the final destruction which Christ now mentions, but of the temporary dispersion which was brought about by the tyranny of Antiochus.[2] But in the twelfth chapter the angel predicts what is called the *final* abrogation of the services of the Law,[3] which was to take place at the coming of Christ. For, after having exhorted believers to unshaken constancy, he fixes absolutely the time both of the ruin and of the restoration.[4]

[1] The passage here referred to, and from which CALVIN thinks that the quotation is *not* made, is Daniel ix. 27, *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifices and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading* OF ABOMINATIONS *he shall make it* DESOLATE, *even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the* DESOLATE. The other passage, from which he supposes the quotation to have been actually made, is Daniel xii. 11, *And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and* THE ABOMINATION THAT MAKETH DESOLATE *set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.* We have given both passages, as they stand in the authorized version.—*Ed.*

[2] Antiochus, known in history by the sirname *Epiphanes*, or, *Illustrious*, but more frequently denominated by the Jews who had beheld his cruelties, and by others who were shocked at the indecency of his public life, Antiochus *Epimanes*, or, *Furious.—Ed.*

[3] "Du service et des ceremonies de la Loy;"—"of the service and of the ceremonies of the Law."

[4] "Car apres qu'il avoit exhorté les fideles à une constance ferme et bien assuree, et avoit predit que l'advenement de Christ mettroit fin aux ceremonies, et donné pour signe la profanation externe du temple, finalement au chapitre treizieme (*douzieme?*) il determine un temps certain

From the time, says he, *that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and* THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION *set up, there will be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who shall wait till he come to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days*, (Daniel xii. 11, 12.)

I am aware that this passage is tortured in a variety of ways on account of its obscurity; but I consider the natural meaning of it to be, that the angel declares that, after the temple has been once purified from the pollutions and idols of Antiochus, another period will arrive when it will be exposed to a new profanation, and when all its sacredness and majesty will be for ever lost.[1] And as that message was sad and melancholy, he again recalls the prophet to one year, and two years, and six months. These words denote both the duration and the close of the calamities; for, in an interrupted succession of calamities, the course of one year appears to us very long, but when that space of time is doubled, the distress is greatly increased. The Spirit therefore exhorts believers to prepare themselves for the exercise of patience, not only for a single year, that is, for a long period, but to lay their account with enduring tribulations through an uninterrupted succession of many ages. There is no small consolation also in the phrase, *half a time*, (Dan. xii. 7;) for though the *tribulations* be of long continuance, yet the Spirit shows that they will not be perpetual. And, indeed, he had formerly used this form of expression: The calamity of the Church shall last through *a time, times, and half a time*, (Dan. vii. 25.) But now he reckons the period of *three years and six months* by *days*, that believers may be more and more hardened by a very long continuance of calamities; for it is customary with men in adversity to compute time, not by years or months, but by *days*, a single

tant de la ruine que du restablissement."—"For after having exhorted believers to a firm and assured constancy, and having predicted that the coming of Christ would put an end to ceremonies, and having given the outward profanation of the temple as a sign, finally, in the thirteenth (*twelfth?*) chapter he determines a fixed time both for the ruin and for the restoration."

[1] "Sans esperance de plus la recouvrer;"—"without the expectation of ever again recovering it."

day being, in their estimation, equal to a *year*.[1] He says that those will be *happy* who bear up to the end of that period; that is, who with invincible patience persevere to the end.

Now Christ selects only what suited his purpose, namely, that the termination of sacrifices was at hand, and that the *abomination*, which was the sign of the final *desolation*, would be placed in the temple. But as the Jews were too strongly attached to their present condition, and therefore paid little attention to the prophecies which foretold the abolition of it, Christ, as if endeavouring to gain their ear, bids them read attentively that passage, where they would learn that what appeared to them difficult to be believed was plainly declared by the Prophets.[2] *Abomination* means *profanation;* for this word denotes *uncleanness*,[3] which corrupts or overturns the pure worship of God. It is called *desolation*, because it drew along with it the destruction of the temple and of the government; as he had formerly said, (Dan. ix. 27,) that the pollution introduced by Antiochus was, as it were, the standard of temporary *desolation;* for such I conceive to be the meaning of the *wing*, or, "*spreading out*."[4] It is a mistake to suppose that this expression denotes the siege of Jerusalem, and the mistake receives no countenance from the words of Luke, who did not intend to say the same thing, but some-

[1] In prophetic language *one day* stands *for a year*, a Jewish month (of thirty days) for *thirty years*, and a Jewish year (of three hundred and sixty days) for *three hundred and sixty years*. Thus *a time*, or Jewish year, stood for three hundred and sixty years; *times*, or two Jewish years, stood for seven hundred and twenty years; and *half a time*, or half of a Jewish year, stood for *one hundred and eighty years;* so that the *time, times, and half a time*, (Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7; Rev. xii. 14,) or three years and a half, represented *one thousand two hundred and sixty years*. By a similar computation, *forty-two months*, (Rev. xi. 2; xiii. 5,) of thirty days each, denoted the same period.—*Ed.*

[2] "Sinon qu'on vueille prendre ceci comme estant dit en la personne de l'Evangeliste; toutesfois il est plus vray-semblable que c'est Christ qui parle, et que suyvant son propos d'un fil continuel, il exhorte les siens à estre attentifs à bon escient."—"Unless we choose to take this as having been said in the person of the Evangelist; yet it is more probable that it is Christ who speaks, and that, following out his subject, he exhorts his followers to be earnestly attentive."

[3] "La pollution, immondicité, et souillure;"—"pollution, uncleanness, and defilement."

[4] כנף שקוצים משמם, *the wing* (or, *spreading out*) *of* ABOMINATIONS *which maketh* DESOLATE.—*Ed.*

thing quite different. For that city having been formerly delivered, when it appeared to be in the midst of destruction, lest believers should expect something of the same kind in future, Christ declares that, as soon as it would be *surrounded by armies*, it was utterly ruined, because it was wholly deprived of divine assistance. The meaning therefore is, that the issue of the war will not be doubtful, because that city is devoted to destruction, which it will not be able to escape any more than to rescind a decree of heaven. Accordingly, Luke shortly afterwards adds, that *Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles*, a mode of expression which denotes utter ruin. But as it might appear to be strange that the holy city should be thus given up to *the Gentiles*, to do with it as they pleased, he adds a consolation,[1] that it was only for a time that so much liberty was allowed to *the Gentiles*, till their iniquity was ripe, and the vengeance which had been reserved for them was fully displayed.

16. *Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains.* Having shown by the testimony of the prophet that, when the temple had been profaned, the services of the Law would soon afterwards be abolished, he adds, that fearful and appalling calamities will soon overtake the whole of *Judea*, so that there will be nothing more desirable than to withdraw to a distance from it; and, at the same time, he states that they will be so sudden, that there will scarcely be time allowed for the most rapid flight. For such is the import of the expressions, *Let not him who is on the house-top enter into the house; let not him who is in the field turn back;* that is, lest, by attempting to save their property, they themselves perish. Again, *Woe to the women with child, and to them that give suck;* for they will not be in a fit condition for flight. Again, *Pray that your flight may not be in the winter;* that is, that neither a regard to the sacredness of the day, nor the roughness of the roads, nor the shortness of the days, may prevent or

1 "Il adjouste quant et quant une consolation speciale pour le regard des fideles, (laquelle Daniel omet, pource qu'il parle à tout le corps du peuple;")—"he adds to it a special consolation with respect to believers, (which Daniel leaves out, because he speaks to the whole body of the people.")

retard your flight. The design of Christ therefore was, first, to arouse his followers, that they might no longer indulge the hope of ease and repose, and the enjoyments of an earthly kingdom; and, secondly, to fortify their minds, that they might not give way under ordinary calamities. Such an admonition, no doubt, was far from being agreeable, but, in consequence of their stupidity, and the great weight of the calamities, it was highly necessary.

21. *For there will then be great tribulation.* Luke says also, that there will be *days of vengeance, and of wrath on that people, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.* For since *the people*, through obstinate malice, had then broken the covenant of God, it was proper that alarming changes should take place, by which the earth itself and the air would be shaken. True, indeed, the most destructive plague inflicted on the Jews was, that the light of heavenly doctrine was extinguished among them, and that they were rejected by God; but they were compelled—as the great hardness of their hearts made it necessary that they should be compelled—to feel the evil of their rejection by sharp and severe chastisements. Now the true cause of such an awful punishment was, that the desperate wickedness of that nation had reached its height. For not only had they haughtily despised, but even disdainfully rejected the medicine which was brought for their diseases; and, what was worse, like persons who were mad or possessed by the devil, they wreaked their cruelty on the Physician himself.[1] Since the Lord executed his vengeance on those men for their inveterate contempt of the Gospel, accompanied by incorrigible rage, let their punishment be always before our eyes; and let us learn from it, that no offence is more heinous in the sight of God, than obstinacy in despising his grace. But though all who in like manner despise the Gospel will receive the same punishment, God determined to make a very extraordinary demonstration in the case of the Jews, that the coming of

[1] "Ils s'estoyent ruez cruellement, contre la personne mesme du Medecin, le mettant à mort."—"They had pursued with cruel rage the very person of the Physician, putting him to death."

Christ might be regarded by posterity with greater admiration and reverence. For no words can express the baseness of their criminality in putting to death the Son of God, who had been sent to them as the Author of life. Having committed this execrable sacrilege, they did not cease to incur the guilt of one crime after another, and thus to draw down upon themselves every ground of utter destruction. And, therefore, Christ declares that *never afterwards will there be such tribulation* in the world; for, as the rejection of Christ, viewed in itself, and especially as attended by so many circumstances of detestable obstinacy and ingratitude, was worthy of abhorrence above all the sins committed in all ages, so also it was proper that, in the severity of punishment with which it was visited, it should go beyond all others.

22. *And unless those days had been shortened.* He presents an appalling view of those calamities, but at the same time mingles it with this consolation, that they would be sufficient to exterminate the very name of the Jews, if God did not look to *his elect*, and on their account grant some alleviation. This passage agrees with that of Isaiah: *Unless the Lord had left us a small seed, we would have been as Sodom, and we would have been like Gomorrah,* (Isa. i. 9.) For it was necessary, as Paul assures us, that the vengeance of God, which had been displayed in the Babylonish captivity, should be again fulfilled at the coming of Christ, (Rom. ix. 29.) Nay more, in proportion as our wickedness was greater, it deserved a greater severity of punishment. And therefore Christ says that, unless God put a period to those calamities, the Jews will utterly perish, so that not a single individual will be left; but that God will remember his gracious covenant, and will spare *his elect*, according to that other prediction of Isaiah, *Though thy people were like the sand of the sea, a remnant only shall be saved,* (Isa. x. 22.)

This affords us a striking proof of the judgment of God, when he afflicts his visible Church to such a degree, that we would be ready to conclude that it had altogether perished; and yet, in order to *preserve some seed*, he miraculously rescues from destruction *his* elect, though few in number, that,

contrary to expectation, they may escape from the jaws of death. For, on the one hand, it is fitted to alarm hypocrites, that they may not, through reliance on the title and outward appearance of a Church, cherish the vain hope that they will pass unpunished, for the Lord will find some means of delivering his Church, when those men have been given up to destruction; and, on the other hand, it conveys a wonderful consolation to the godly, that God will never allow his wrath to proceed so far as not to provide for their safety. Thus, in punishing the Jews, the wrath of God burned to an extent which was truly awful, and yet, contrary to the expectation of men, he restrained it in such a manner, that not one of *the elect* perished. And it was a miracle which almost exceeded belief, that, as salvation was to proceed from Judea, out of a few drops of a fountain which was dried up God formed rivers to water the whole world; for, in consequence of the hatred of all nations which they had drawn upon themselves, they narrowly escaped from being murdered in all places, by a preconcerted signal, in one day. Nor can it be doubted, that when many persons entreated that they should be slaughtered in this manner, Titus was restrained by God from giving permission to his soldiers and to others who were excessively desirous to carry such a design into execution; and, therefore, when the Roman Emperor at that time prevented the utter destruction of the whole nation, that was the *shortening* here mentioned, for *preserving some seed*, (Isa. i. 9.)

Yet it ought to be observed, that it was *on account of the elect* that God restrained the fierceness of his anger, that he might not consume them all. For why did he determine that a few should remain out of a vast multitude? and what reason had he for giving them a preference above others? It was because his grace dwelt in the people whom he had adopted; and, that his covenant might not fail, some were *elected* and appointed to salvation by his eternal purpose. Hence Paul ascribes to free *election* (Rom. xi. 5) the reason why out of an immense nation *a remnant* only was saved. Away then with human merits, when our attention is directed exclusively to the good pleasure of God, that the distinction

between some persons and others may depend solely on this, that those who have been *elected* must be saved. To state the matter more clearly and fully, *Mark* uses a superfluity of words,[1] expressing it thus, *on account of the elect, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.* Certainly the use of the word *elect* might have been sufficient, if he had not intended to state expressly that God is not induced by external causes to bestow his favour on some rather than on others; but that, because he has *elected* those whom he will save, he ratifies the secret purpose of his grace in their salvation.

But a question arises, How was it *on account of the elect* that God set a limit to these calamities, so as not utterly to destroy the Jews, when many of those who were saved were reprobate and desperate? The reply is easy. A part of the nation was preserved, that out of them God might bring his *elect*, who were mixed with them, like the seed after the chaff has been blown off. So then, though temporal safety was bestowed equally on the reprobate and on *the elect*, yet, as it was of no advantage to the reprobate, it is justly ascribed to *the elect* alone, for it was to their benefit that the wonderful providence of God was directed.

23. *If any one shall then say to you.* He again repeats what he had said about impostors, and not without reason; for there was great danger arising from this temptation, that wretched men, while their affairs were in a troubled and desperate condition, would be deceived by false pretences, would seek phantoms instead of Christ, and would embrace the delusions of Satan, as if they were assistance from God. As the Jews, when they were so severely oppressed on account of having despised redemption, needed, at least, violent remedies to restrain them from treachery, Satan cunningly held out to them new hopes, which would withdraw them still farther from God. And certainly, when we are left without direction in adversity, nothing is more pernicious than to be deceived, under the disguise of the name of God, by falsehoods which not only shut against us the door of

[1] "Il use de redite, ou de paroles superflues;"—"he makes use of a repetition, or of superfluous words."

repentance, but increase the darkness of infidelity, and at length overwhelm us with despair, and drive us to madness. The repetition of the statement, therefore, was far from being superfluous, when the danger was so great; and especially when Christ warns them that *false prophets* will come prepared with no ordinary instruments of deception, with *signs and wonders* fitted to confound weak minds. For since it is by miracles that God attests the presence of his power, and since they are therefore seals of the true doctrine, we need not wonder if impostors gain credit by them. By this kind of delusion God revenges the ingratitude of men, that they who rejected the truth may believe a lie, and that they who shut their eyes against the light which was offered to them may be plunged deeper and deeper in darkness. He exercises, at the same time, the constancy of his followers, which comes to shine with greater brightness, when they give way to no kind of impostures.

Again, since our Lord declares that *antichrists* and *false prophets* would be armed with miracles, there is no reason why the Papists should talk so haughtily on this ground, or why we should be terrified by their boasting. In support of their superstitions they plead miracles,—those very miracles which, the Son of God predicted, would corrupt the faith of many, and which, therefore, wise men ought not to hold in such estimation as to be sufficient of themselves to prove either one or another kind of doctrine. If it be objected, that such reasoning would overthrow and set aside the miracles by which both the Law and the Gospel were ratified, I reply, that the Spirit engraved on them an undoubted mark, which removed from believers all doubt and fear of being mistaken. For when God displayed his power for the purpose of confirming his people, he did not act in so confused a manner as not to manifest the true and infallible distinction. Besides, the manner in which miracles seal doctrine is such, that the doctrine itself mutually shines before them, and dispels all the clouds by which Satan darkens the minds of the simple. In short, if we wish to guard against impostures, let us preserve the connection between miracles and doctrine unbroken.

24. *So that even the elect (if it were possible) will be led into error.* This was added for the purpose of exciting alarm, that believers may be more careful to be on their guard; for when such unbounded freedom of action is allowed to *false prophets*, and when they are permitted to exert such powers of deceiving, those who are careless and inattentive would easily be entangled by their snares. Christ therefore exhorts and arouses his disciples to keep watch, and at the same time reminds them that there is no reason for being troubled at the strangeness of the sight, if they see many persons on every hand led away into error. While he excites them to solicitude, that Satan may not overtake them in a state of sloth, he gives them abundant ground of confidence on which they may calmly rely, when he promises that they will be safe under the defence and protection of God against all the snares of Satan. And thus, however frail and slippery the condition of the godly may be, yet here is a firm footing on which they may stand; for it is not possible for them to fall away from salvation, to whom the Son of God is a faithful guardian. For they have not sufficient energy to resist the attacks of Satan, unless in consequence of their being *the sheep of Christ, which none can pluck out of his hand*, (John x. 28.) It must therefore be observed, that the permanency of our salvation does not depend on us, but on the secret election of God; for though our salvation *is kept through faith*, as Peter tells us, (1 Pet. i. 5,) yet we ought to ascend higher, and assure ourselves that we are in safety, because the Father hath given us to the Son, and the Son himself declares, that *none who have been given to him shall perish*, (John xvii. 12.)

25. *Lo, I have foretold it to you.* Mark expresses our Lord's meaning more fully. *But take heed: lo, I have foretold you all things.* By these words we are taught that they who are dismayed by the stumbling-blocks which Christ predicted are altogether inexcusable; for since the will of God ought to be our rule, it is sufficient that we have received timely warning that such is his pleasure. Again, as he declares that *he is faithful, and will not suffer us to be*

tempted beyond what we are able to bear, (1 Cor. x. 13,) we shall never be in want of strength to resist, provided that our weakness be not nourished by indifference.

26. *Lo, he is in the desert.* Luke connects this discourse with another reply of Christ; for, having been interrogated by the Pharisees *about the coming of the kingdom of God*, he replied, that *it would not come with observation;* and then follows in Luke's narrative that, turning *to his disciples*, he informed them that *the days would come when they would no longer see a day of the Son of man.* By these words he intended to charge them *to walk in the light, before the darkness of the night overtook them*, (John xii. 35;) for this ought to have been a very powerful excitement to endeavour to make progress, so long as they enjoyed the presence of Christ, when they learned that very serious disturbances were at hand. Whether or not Christ admonished his disciples twice on this subject is uncertain; but I think it probable that Luke, while he was speaking of *the coming of the kingdom of God*, introduced sentences taken from a different occasion, which he frequently does, as we have seen in other instances.

But as this passage has been, through ignorance, tortured in various ways, that the reader may ascertain the true meaning, he must attend to the contrast between a state of concealment and that extension of the kingdom of Christ far and wide, and which would be sudden and unexpected, *as the lightning flashes from the east to the west.* For we know that the *false Christs*—in accordance with the gross and foolish hope of that nation—drew along with them as large bodies of men as they could collect into the recesses of the desert, or into caverns, or other places of retirement, in order to throw off the yoke of the Roman government by force and by arms. The meaning therefore is, that every one who collects his forces into a secret place, in order to regain the freedom of the nation by arms, falsely pretends to be *the Christ;* for the Redeemer is sent to diffuse his grace suddenly and unexpectedly through every quarter of the world. But these two things are quite contrary, to shut up redemption within some corner, and to spread it through the whole world. The disciples were thus reminded

that they must no longer seek a Redeemer within the small enclosure of Judea, because he will suddenly extend the limits of his kingdom to the uttermost ends of the world. And, indeed, this astonishing rapidity, with which the gospel flew through every part of the world, was a manifest testimony of divine power. For it could not be the result of human industry, that the light of the gospel, as soon as it appear, darted from one side of the world to the opposite side *like lightning;* and therefore it is not without reason that Christ introduces this circumstance for demonstrating and magnifying his heavenly glory. Besides, by holding out this vast extent of his kingdom, he intended to show that the desolation of Judea would not hinder him from reigning.

28. *Wheresoever the carcase is.* The meaning is, that by whatever methods Satan endeavours to scatter the children of God in various directions, still in Christ himself is the sacred bond of union, by which they must be kept united. For whence comes the dispersion, but that many depart from Christ, in whom alone our strength lies? Here then is a method laid down for promoting a holy union, that the separations produced by errors may not tear in pieces the body of the Church; and that method is, when we remain united to Christ. This ought to be carefully observed; for Christ does not restrict us either to the primacy of the Roman See, or to any other foolery, but employs this method alone for binding his Church together, that all in every quarter should look to him as the only head. Hence it follows, that those who are united to him by pure faith are beyond the risk of schism. Let the adherents of Rome now go, and exclaim that all are schismatics who do not allow themselves to be separated from Christ, that they may transfer their allegiance to a robber.

There also will the eagles be gathered together. When the Papists interpret the word *carcase* to denote the company of those who profess the same faith, and allegorically explain *the eagles* to represent acute and sagacious men,[1] it is exces-

[1] "Les gens subtils et de jugement, à scavoir les docteurs;"—"men of acuteness and judgment, namely, the doctors."

sively absurd;[1] for Christ had manifestly no other design than to call to himself, and to retain in union to him, the children of God, wherever they were scattered. Nor does Christ simply employ the word *body*, but (πτῶμα) *carcase*;[2] and he ascribes nothing to *eagles* but what we might apply to *crows* or *vultures*, according to the nature of the country which we inhabit. I attach as little value to the ingenuity of other commentators, who say that the death of Christ had a sweet savour, to draw the elect to God; for, in my opinion, Christ intended to argue from the less to the greater, that if birds have so great sagacity as to flock in great numbers from distant places to a single *carcase*, it would be disgraceful in believers not to assemble to the Author of life, from whom alone they derive their actual nourishment.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXIV. 29. And immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 30. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory. 31. And he shall send his angels with a loud sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one extremity of heaven to the other.	XIII. 24. But in those days, after that tribulation, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. 25. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers which are in heaven shall be shaken. 26. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27. And then shall he send his angels, and gather together his elect from the four winds, from the extremity of the earth to the extremity of heaven.	XXI. 25. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and on the earth the anguish of nations in despair, the sea and the waves roaring: 26. Men fainting through fear,[3] and expectation of those things which shall come on the world; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and glory. 28. But when these things begin to take place, look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption is at hand.

[1] "Il n'y a ne rime ne raison en cela;"—"there is neither rhyme nor reason in it."

[2] "Aussi le mot Grec duquel use l'Evangeliste, ne signifie pas simplement un corps, mais un corps mort."—"The Greek word, too, which the Evangelist employs, does not denote simply *a body*, but *a dead body*."

[3] "Tellement que les hommes seront comme morts de peur;"—"so that men will be as if dead through fear."

Matthew XXIV. 29. *And immediately after the tribulation of those days.* Christ comes now to speak of the full manifestation of his kingdom, about which he was at first interrogated by the disciples, and promises that, after they have been tried by so many distressing events, the redemption will arrive in due time. The principal object of his reply was, to confirm his disciples in good hope, that they might not be dismayed on account of the troubles and confusion that would arise. For this reason, he does not speak of *his coming* in simple terms, but employs those modes of expression which were common among the prophets, by which, the more attentively they were considered, so much the more severe would be the contest of temptation experienced by the reader, in consequence of the opposite character of the event. For what could be more strange than to see the kingdom of Christ not only despised, but oppressed by the cross, loaded with many reproaches, and overwhelmed by every kind of *tribulation*,—that kingdom which the prophets had frequently described in such magnificent language? Might it not be asked, where was that majesty which would darken *the sun, and moon, and stars*, shake the whole frame of the world, and change the ordinary course of nature? Our Lord now meets these temptations, declaring that, though these predictions are not immediately fulfilled, they will at length be fully justified by the event. The meaning therefore is, that the predictions which had been formerly made about the miraculous *shaking of heaven and earth*, ought not to be restricted to the commencement of redemption, because the prophets had embraced the whole course of it, till it should arrive at perfection.

Having now ascertained Christ's intention, we shall have no difficulty in perceiving the meaning of the words to be, that *heaven* will not be *darkened* immediately, but after that the Church shall have passed through the whole course of its *tribulations*. Not that the glory and majesty of the kingdom of Christ will not appear till his last coming, but because till that time is delayed the accomplishment of those things which began to take place after his resurrection, and of which God gave to his people nothing more than a taste, that he

might lead them farther on in the path of hope and patience. According to this argument, Christ keeps the minds of believers in a state of suspense till the last day, that they may not imagine those declarations which the prophets made, about the future restoration, to have failed of their accomplishment, because they lie buried for a long period under the thick *darkness* of *tribulations.*

The tribulation of those days is improperly interpreted by some commentators to mean the destruction of Jerusalem; for, on the contrary, it is a general recapitulation (ἀναχεφαλαίωσις) of all the evils of which Christ had previously spoken. To encourage his followers to patience, he employs this argument, that the *tribulations* will at length have a happy and joyful result. As if he had said, "So long as the Church shall continue its pilgrimage in the world, there will be dark and cloudy weather; but as soon as an end shall have been put to those distresses, a day will arrive when the majesty of the Church shall be illustriously displayed." In what manner *the sun will be darkened* we cannot now conjecture, but the event will show. He does not indeed mean that *the stars* will actually fall, but according to the apprehension of men; and accordingly Luke only predicts that *there will be* SIGNS *in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.* The meaning therefore is, that there will be such a violent commotion of the firmament of heaven, that *the stars* themselves will be supposed *to fall.* Luke also adds that there will be a dreadful commotion of the sea, *the sea and the waves roaring, so that men will faint through fear* and alarm. In a word, all the creatures above and below will be, as it were, heralds to summon men to that tribunal, which they will continue to treat with ungodly and wanton contempt till the last day.

30. *Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man.* By this term Christ points out more clearly the difference between the present condition of his kingdom and its future glory; for it is a sort of admission that, amidst the *darkness* of *tribulations*, the majesty of Christ will not fully appear, and men will not perceive the redemption which he has brought. The confused mixture of things which we now perceive does cer-

tainly, on the one hand, *darken* our minds, and, on the other hand, bury the grace of Christ, and make it almost vanish from our sight, so that the salvation obtained by him, so far as relates to the perception of the flesh, is not comprehended. And therefore he declares that he will appear openly at his last coming, and, surrounded by the heavenly power, which will be a *sign* erected on an elevated spot, he will turn the eyes of the whole world upon himself.[1]

Perceiving that the greater part of men would despise his doctrine and oppose his reign, he threatens also against all nations *mourning* and *lamentation;* because it is proper, that by his presence he should crush and destroy the rebels, who, while he was absent, despised his authority. He says this, partly to bring the haughty and refractory to repentance, by striking them with terror; and partly to confirm the minds of his followers amidst so great obstinacy existing in the world. For it is no slight ground of offence to see the ungodly living without concern, because they think that their mockery of God will remain unpunished; and again, there is nothing to which we are more prone than to be captivated by the allurements of the prosperity which they enjoy, so as to lose the fear of God. That the joy by which they are intoxicated may not excite the envy of believers, Christ declares that it will at length be turned into *mourning* and *gnashing of teeth.*

He alludes, I think, to Zechariah xii. 11--14, where God, informing them that a striking display of his judgment will soon be made, declares that there will be *lamentation in every family,* such as is not usually seen at the funeral of a first-born son. There is no reason, therefore, why any person should expect the conversion of the world, for at length—when it will be too late, and will yield them no advantage—*they shall look on him whom they pierced,* (Zech. xii. 10.) Next follows the explanation of that *sign,* that *they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds,* who at that time was living on earth in the garb of a despised servant. And thus

[1] "La puissance celeste, de laquelle il sera environné, servira comme d'une enseigne desployee pour contreindre tout le monde à le regarder;" —"the heavenly power, by which he shall be surrounded, will serve as a standard displayed to compel the whole world to look at him."

he warns them that the glory of his kingdom will be heavenly, and not earthly, as the disciples had falsely imagined.

And he shall send his angels. He describes the effect of his power, that *he will send his angels to gather his elect* from the most distant parts of the world; for by *the extremity of heaven* is meant the most distant region. But Christ speaks hyperbolically, in order to show that *the elect*, even though they were carried away from the earth and scattered in the air, will again be gathered, so to be united in the enjoyment of eternal life under Him as their head, and enjoy the expected inheritance; for Christ intended to console his disciples, that they might not be altogether discouraged by the lamentable dispersion of the Church. Whenever, therefore, we perceive the Church scattered by the wiles of Satan, or torn in pieces by the cruelty of the ungodly, or disturbed by false doctrines, or tossed about by storms, let us learn to turn our eyes to this *gathering of the elect.* And if it appear to us a thing difficult to be believed, let us call to remembrance the power of *the angels*, which Christ holds out to us for the express purpose of raising our views above human means. For, though the Church be now tormented by the malice of men, or even broken by the violence of the billows, and miserably torn in pieces, so as to have no stability in the world, yet we ought always to cherish confident hope, because it will not be by human means, but by heavenly power, which will be far superior to every obstacle, that the Lord will *gather* his Church.

Luke XXI. 28. *And when these things begin to take place.* Luke expresses more clearly the consolation by which Christ animates the minds of his followers; for, though this sentence contains nothing different from the words of Matthew, which we have just now explained, yet it shows better for what purpose *the angels will come*, as we are told, *to gather the elect.* For it was necessary to contrast the joy of the godly with the general sorrow and distress of the world, and to point out the difference between them and the reprobate, that they might not view with horror the coming of Christ. We know that Scripture, when it speaks not only of the last judgment,

but of all the judgments which God executes every day, describes them in a variety of ways, according as the discourse is addressed to believers or to unbelievers. *To what purpose is the day of the Lord to you?* says the prophet Amos, (v. 18.) *It is a day of darkness and gloominess,*[1] *not of light;* of sorrow, not of joy; of destruction, not of salvation. On the other hand, Zechariah (ix. 9) bids the *daughter of Zion rejoice* on account of the *coming* of her *King;* and justly, for—as Isaiah (xxxv. 4) tells us—the same day which brings wrath and vengeance to the reprobate brings good-will and *redemption* to believers.

Christ therefore shows that, at his coming, the light of joy will arise on his disciples, that they may rejoice in the approaching salvation, while the wicked are overwhelmed with terror. Accordingly, Paul distinguishes them by this mark, that they *wait for* the *day* or *coming of the Lord*, (1 Cor. i. 7;) for that which is their *crown*, and perfect happiness, and solace, is delayed till *that day*, (2 Tim. iv. 8.) It is therefore called here (as in Rom. viii. 23) *redemption;* because we shall then obtain truly and perfectly the consequences of the deliverance obtained through Christ. Let our ears therefore be awake to the sound of the *angel's trumpet*, which will then sound, not only to strike the reprobate with the dread of death, but to arouse the elect to a second life; that is, to call to the enjoyment of life those whom the Lord now quickens by the voice of his Gospel; for it is a sign of infidelity, to be afraid when the Son of God comes in person for our salvation.

[1] Our author—quoting from memory, as he frequently does—appears to have incorporated the words of the prophet Amos, (v. 18,) *To what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light*, with a parallel passage in Joel, (ii. 1, 2,) *for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.—Ed.*

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXIV. 32. Now learn a similitude from the fig-tree. When its branch is already tender, and putteth forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh. 33. In like manner, when you shall see all these things, know you that it is nigh, at the door. 34. Verily I say to you, This generation shall not pass away till all these things be done. 35. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36. But of that day and hour no man knoweth, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father alone.	XIII. 28. Now learn a similitude from the fig-tree. When its branch is still tender, and putteth forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh. 29. In like manner, when you shall see these things happen, know you that it is nigh at the door. 30. Verily I say to you, That this generation shall not pass till all those things be done. 31. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 32. But of that day and hour no man knoweth, not even the angels which are in heaven, nor the Son himself, but the Father alone.	XXI. 29. And he addressed to them a similitude. Look at the fig-tree and all the trees. 30. When they are already putting forth buds, you perceive of yourselves and know that the summer is already at hand. 31. In like manner, when you shall see these things happen, know you that the kingdom of God is at hand. 32. Verily I say to you, This generation shall not pass before all these things are done. 33. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Matthew XXIV. 32. *Now learn a similitude from the fig-tree.* I do not suppose the meaning of this to be merely that, during the state of confusion which has been mentioned, there will be as evident a sign that the coming of Christ is *nigh*, as that by which we know with certainty that the summer is at hand, when the trees begin to grow green; but, in my opinion, Christ expresses something else. For as in winter the trees, contracted by the severity of the cold, show greater vigour, but in spring lose their toughness, and appear more feeble, and are even cleft asunder to open up a passage for fresh twigs, so the afflictions by which, according to the perception of the flesh, the Church is softened, do not in any way impair its vigour. As the inward sap diffused through the whole tree, after having produced this softness, collects strength to throw itself out for renovating what was dead, so the Lord draws from the corruption of the outward man the perfect restoration of his people. The general instruction conveyed is, that the weak and frail condition of the Church ought not to lead us to conclude that it is dying, but rather to expect the immortal glory for which the Lord

prepares his people by the cross and by afflictions; for what Paul maintains in reference to each of the members must be fulfilled in the whole body, that *if the outward man is decayed, the inward man is renewed day by day*, (2 Cor. iv. 16.)

What Matthew and Mark had stated more obscurely, *know you that it is nigh at the door*, is more fully explained by Luke, *know you that* THE KINGDOM OF GOD *is at hand;* and in this passage *the kingdom of God* is not represented—as in many other passages—at its commencement, but at its perfection, and that according to the views of those whom Christ was teaching. For they did not view *the kingdom of God* in the Gospel as consisting in the *peace* and *joy* of faith, and in spiritual *righteousness*, (Rom. xiv. 17,) but sought that blessed rest and glory which is concealed under hope till the last day.

34. *This generation shall not pass away.* Though Christ employs a general expression, yet he does not extend the discourses to all the miseries which would befall the Church, but merely informs them, that before a single *generation* shall have been completed, they will learn by experience the truth of what he has said. For within fifty years the city was destroyed and the temple was rased, the whole country was reduced to a hideous desert, and the obstinacy of the world rose up against God. Nay more, their rage was inflamed to exterminate the doctrine of salvation, false teachers arose to corrupt the pure gospel by their impostures, religion sustained amazing shocks, and the whole company of the godly was miserably distressed. Now though the same evils were perpetrated in uninterrupted succession for many ages afterwards, yet what Christ said was true, that, before the close of a single *generation*, believers would feel in reality, and by undoubted experience, the truth of his prediction; for the apostles endured the same things which we see in the present day.[1] And yet it was not the design of Christ to promise to his followers that their calamities would be terminated within a short time, (for then he would have contradicted himself, having previously warned them that *the end was not yet;*) but, in order to encourage them to perseverance, he

[1] "Que nous voyons aujourdhui advenir aux fideles;" "which we see in the present day happen to believers."

expressly foretold that those things related to their own age. The meaning therefore is: "This prophecy does not relate to evils that are distant, and which posterity will see after the lapse of many centuries, but which are now hanging over you, and ready to fall in one mass, so that there is no part of it which the present *generation* will not experience." So then, while our Lord heaps upon a single *generation* every kind of calamities, he does not by any means exempt future ages from the same kind of sufferings, but only enjoins the disciples to be prepared for enduring them all with firmness.

35. *Heaven and earth shall pass away.* In order to secure greater confidence in his statements, he illustrates their certainty by this comparison, that it is more firm and stable than the entire structure of the world.[1] But this form of expression is explained by commentators in a variety of ways. Some refer it to the *passing away of heaven and earth* at the last day, by which their frail constitution will be brought to an end; while others explain it to mean, that sooner shall the entire structure of the world perish, than the prophecy which we have just heard shall fail to be accomplished. But as there can be no doubt that Christ expressly intended to raise the minds of his followers above the contemplation of the world, I think that he refers to the continual changes which we see in the world, and affirms, that we ought not to judge of his sayings by the changeful character of the world, which resembles the billows of the sea; for we know how easily our minds are carried away by the affairs of the world, when it is undergoing incessant change. For this reason, Christ enjoins his disciples not to allow their attention to be occupied by the world, but to look down, from what may be called the lofty watch-tower of divine providence, on all that he foretold would happen. Yet from this passage we draw a useful doctrine, that our salvation, because it is founded on the promises of Christ, does not fluctuate according to the various agitations of the world, but remains unshaken, provided only that our faith rises above *heaven and earth*, and ascends to Christ himself.

[1] "Que tout l'ordre de nature qui se voit au ciel et à la terre;"—"than the whole order of nature which is seen in heaven and in earth."

36. *But of that day and hour.* By this sentence, Christ intended to hold the minds of believers in suspense, that they might not, by a false imagination, fix any time for the final redemption. We know how fickle our minds are, and how much we are tickled by a vain curiosity to know more than is proper. Christ likewise perceived that the disciples were pushing forward with excessive haste to enjoy a triumph. He therefore wishes the *day* of his coming to be the object of such expectation and desire, that none shall dare to inquire when it will happen. In short, he wishes his disciples so to walk in the light of faith, that while they are uncertain as to the time, they may patiently wait for the revelation of him. We ought therefore to be on our guard, lest our anxiety about the time be carried farther than the Lord allows; for the chief part of our wisdom lies in confining ourselves soberly within the limits of God's word. That men may not feel uneasy at *not knowing that day*, Christ represents *angels* as their associates in this matter; for it would be a proof of excessive pride and wicked covetousness, to desire that we who creep on the earth should know more than is permitted to the *angels* in heaven.[1]

Mark adds, *nor the Son himself.* And surely that man must be singularly mad, who would hesitate to submit to the ignorance which even *the Son of God himself* did not hesitate to endure on our account. But many persons, thinking that this was unworthy of Christ, have endeavoured to mitigate the harshness of this opinion by a contrivance of their own; and perhaps they were driven to employ a subterfuge by the malice of the Arians, who attempted to prove from it that Christ is not the true and only God. So then, according to those men, Christ did not know the last day, because he did not choose to reveal it to men. But since it is manifest that the same kind of ignorance is ascribed to Christ as is ascribed to *the angels*, we must endeavour to find some other meaning which is more suitable. Before stating it, however, I shall briefly dispose of the objections of those who think that it is an insult offered to the Son of God, if it be said that any kind of ignorance can properly apply to him.

[1] "Aux anges de Paradis;"—"to the angels in Paradise."

As to the first objection, that nothing is unknown to God, the answer is easy. For we know that in Christ the two natures were united into one person in such a manner that each retained its own properties; and more especially the Divine nature was in a state of repose, and did not at all exert itself,[1] whenever it was necessary that the human nature should act separately, according to what was peculiar to itself, in discharging the office of Mediator. There would be no impropriety, therefore, in saying that Christ, who *knew all things*, (John xxi. 17,) was ignorant of something in respect of his perception as a man; for otherwise he could not have been liable to grief and anxiety, and could not have been *like us*, (Heb. ii. 17.) Again, the objection urged by some—that ignorance cannot apply to Christ, because it is the punishment of sin—is beyond measure ridiculous. For, first, it is prodigious folly to assert that the ignorance which is ascribed to angels proceeds from sin; but they discover themselves to be equally foolish on another ground, by not perceiving that Christ clothed himself with our flesh, for the purpose of enduring the punishment due to our sins. And if Christ, as man, did not know the last day, that does not any more derogate from his Divine nature than to have been mortal.

I have no doubt that he refers to the office appointed to him by the Father, as in a former instance, when he said that *it did not belong to him* to place this or that person *at his right or left hand*, (Matth. xx. 23; Mark x. 40.) For (as I explained under that passage[2]) he did not absolutely say that this was not in his power, but the meaning was, that he had not been sent by the Father with this commission, so long as he lived among mortals. So now I understand that, so far as he had come down to us to be Mediator, until he had fully discharged his office, that information was not given to him which he received after his resurrection; for then he expressly declared that power over all things had been given to him, (Matth. xxviii. 18.)

[1] "La Divinité s'est tenue comme cachee; c'est à dire, n'a point demonstré sa vertu;"—"the Divine nature was kept, as it were, concealed; that is, did not display its power."

[2] *Harmony*, vol. ii. p. 421.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXIV. 37. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38. For as in the days that came before the deluge, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the day when Noah entered into the ark, 39. And knew not until the deluge came,[1] and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 40. Two men shall then be in the field; one is taken, and the other is left. 41. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and the other is left. 42. Watch therefore, for you know not at what hour your Lord will come.	XIII. 33. Take heed, watch and pray; for you know not when the time is.	XVII. 26. And as it happened in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27. They ate, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage, till that day when Noah entered into the ark; and the deluge came, and destroyed them all. 28. In like manner also, as it happened in the days of Lot, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29. But on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30. In all these respects shall the day be when the Son of man shall be revealed. 31. In that day, let not him who shall be on the house-top, and his furniture in the house, go down to take them away; and in like manner, let not him who shall be in the field return to what he hath left behind. 32. Remember Lot's wife. 33. Whosoever shall seek to save his soul, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose it, will beget it to life.[2] 34. I tell you, in that night two men shall be in one bed; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. 35. Two women shall be grinding together; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. 36. Two men shall be in the field; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. 37. Then they answering say to him, Where, Lord? And he said to them, Wherever the carcase is, there will the eagles also be gathered together. XXI. 34. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. 35. For as a snare shall it come[3] on all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36. Watch therefore, praying at all times that you may be permitted to escape all those things which shall happen, and to stand before the Son of man.

Matthew XXIV. 37. *But as the days of Noah were.* Although Christ lately expressed his desire to keep the

[1] "Et ne cognurent le deluge, jusqu'à ce qu'il fust venu;"—"and were not aware of the deluge, until it was come."

[2] "Il l'engendrera en vie, *ou, la vivifiera, ou, luy fera avoir vie;*"—"he will beget it to life, *or, will quicken it, or, will cause it to have life.*"

[3] "Car il surprendra comme un laqs;"—"for it will come unawares at a snare."

minds of his followers in suspense, that they might not inquire too anxiously about the last day; yet, lest the indifference arising out of the enjoyments of the world should lull them to sleep, he now exhorts them to solicitude. He wished them to be uncertain as to his coming, but yet to be prepared to expect him every day, or rather every moment.[1] To shake off their sloth, and to excite them more powerfully to be on their guard, he foretells that the end will come, while the world is sunk in brutal indifference; just as *in the days of Noah* all the nations were swallowed up by *the deluge*, when they had no expectation of it, but rioted in gluttony and voluptuousness, and shortly afterwards, the inhabitants of *Sodom*, while they were abandoning themselves without fear to sensuality, were consumed by fire from heaven. Since indifference of this sort will exist about the time of the last day, believers ought not to indulge themselves after the example of the multitude.

We have now ascertained the design of Christ, which was, to inform believers that, in order to prevent themselves from being suddenly overtaken, they ought always to keep watch, because the day of the last judgment will come when it is not expected. Luke alone mentions *Sodom*, and that in the seventeenth chapter, where he takes occasion, without attending to the order of time, to relate this discourse of Christ. But it would not have been improper that the two Evangelists should have satisfied themselves with a single example, though Christ mentioned two, more especially when those examples perfectly agreed with each other in this respect, that at one time the whole human race, in the midst of unbroken indolence and pleasure, was suddenly swallowed up,[2] with the exception of a few individuals. When he says that men were giving their whole attention to *eating*, *drinking*, *marriage*, and other worldly employments, at the time when God destroyed the whole world by a *deluge*, and *Sodom* by thunder; these words mean that

[1] "De jour en jour, ou plustost d'heure en heure;"—"from day to day, or rather from hour to hour."

[2] "Avoit esté soudainement destruit par les eaux;"—"was suddenly destroyed by the waters."

they were as fully occupied with the conveniences and enjoyments of the present life, as if there had been no reason to dread any change. And though we shall immediately find him commanding the disciples to guard against *surfeiting* and earthly cares, yet in this passage he does not directly condemn the intemperance, but rather the obstinacy, of those times, in consequence of which, they despised the threatenings of God, and awaited with indifference their awful destruction. Promising to themselves that the condition in which they then were would remain unchanged, they did not scruple to follow without concern their ordinary pursuits. And in itself it would not have been improper, or worthy of condemnation, to make provision for their wants, if they had not with gross stupidity opposed the judgment of God, and rushed, with closed eyes, to unbridled iniquity, as if there had been no Judge in heaven. So now Christ declares that the last age of the world will be in a state of stupid indifference, so that men will think of nothing but the present life, and will extend their cares to a long period, pursuing their ordinary course of life, as if the world were always to remain in the same condition. The comparisons are highly appropriate; for if we consider what then happened, we shall no longer be deceived by the belief that the uniform order of events which we see in the world will always continue. For within three days of the time, when every man was conducting his affairs in the utmost tranquillity, the world was swallowed up by a deluge, and five cities were consumed by fire.

39. *And knew not until the deluge came.* The source and cause of their ignorance was, that unbelief had blinded their minds; as, on the other hand, we are informed by the Apostle, that *Noah* beheld at a distance, by the eyes of *faith*, the vengeance of God which was still concealed, so as to entertain an early dread of it, (Heb. xi. 7.) And here Christ compares *Noah* with the rest of the world, and *Lot* with *the inhabitants of Sodom*, that believers may learn to withdraw, lest they wander and be cut off along with others. But it must be observed that the reprobate, at that time, were

hardened in their wickedness, because the Lord did not show his grace to any but his servants, by giving them a salutary warning to beware in proper time. Not that information of the future deluge was altogether withheld from the inhabitants of the world—before whose eyes *Noah*, in building the ark for more than a hundred years, presented a warning of the approaching calamity—but because one man was specially warned, by divine revelation, of the future destruction of the whole world, and raised up to cherish the hope of salvation. Though the report of the last judgment is now widely circulated, and though there are a few persons who have been taught by God to perceive that Christ will come as a Judge in due time, yet it is proper that those persons should be aroused by this extraordinary kindness of God, and that their senses should be sharpened, lest they give themselves up to the indifference which so generally prevails. For Peter compares the ark of *Noah* with our *baptism* on this ground, that a small company of men, separated from the multitude, is *saved* amidst the waters, (1 Peter iii. 20, 21.) To this small number, therefore, our minds must be directed, if we desire to escape in safety.

40. *Two men shall then be in the field.* Before mentioning this, Luke inserts some sentences; the first of which is represented by Matthew as belonging to the destruction of Jerusalem, *Let not him who shall be on the house-top go down into his house to carry away his furniture.* But it is possible that Christ applied the same words to various subjects. Luke states also a warning, that the disciples should *remember Lot's wife;* that is, that they should *forget those things which are behind*, (Philip. iii. 13,) and advance towards the end of the heavenly calling. For *Lot's wife* was changed into *a pillar of salt*, (Gen. xix. 26,) because, hesitating whether there were good reasons for departing from the city, she *looked behind her*, by which she gave the lie to the heavenly oracle. Perhaps, too, regret at leaving her nest, in which she had dwelt with comfort, induced her to turn her head. Since, therefore, God intended that she should remain as an everlasting demonstration, our minds ought to be

strengthened by the constancy of faith, that they may not hesitate and give way in the middle of the course; and they ought also to be trained to perseverance, in order that, bidding adieu to the fascinations of a transitory life, they may rise cheerfully and willingly towards heaven.

Luke adds a third sentence, *whosoever shall seek to save his soul will lose it*, that the desire of an earthly life may not prevent believers from passing rapidly through the midst of death, to the salvation laid up for them in heaven. And Christ employs a strong expression to denote the frailty of the present life, when he says that souls ζωογονοῦνται—that is, *are begotten into life*—when they are *lost*. His meaning is the same as if he had declared that men do not *live* in the world, because the commencement of that life which is real, and which is worthy of the name, is, to leave the world. Luke afterwards adds what we find also in Matthew, that husbands and wives will then be separated, that the ties by which human beings are bound to each other in the world may not hinder or retard the godly; for it frequently happens that, while men are paying attention to each other, not one of them advances a step. In order, therefore, that every man in his own department, freed from every bond and impediment, may run with cheerfulness, Christ informs us that, out of a single couple, *one* partner *will be taken*, while *the other is left*. Not that all who are united must of necessity be thus separated; for the sacred bond of piety will cause a believing wife to cleave to a believing husband, and will cause children to accompany their father. But Christ only intended, in order to cut off every occasion of delay, to enjoin every one to make haste, that those who are already prepared may not waste their time in waiting for their companions. Immediately afterwards Luke adds, *where the carcase is, there will the eagles also be gathered together;* which must not, however, be restricted to the last day, but as the disciples had asked, *Where, Lord?* that is, "How shall we stand erect amidst so great shaking? and how shall we remain safe amidst such dangerous storms? and to what places of concealment shall we resort for protection, when we are united?" Christ declares—as we find in Matthew—that he is the banner of

solid union, and in which all the children of God must be gathered.

42. *Watch therefore.* In Luke the exhortation is more pointed, or, at least, more special, *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life.* And certainly he who, by living in intemperance, has his senses overloaded with food and wine, will never elevate his mind to meditation on the heavenly life. But as there is no desire of the flesh that does not intoxicate a man, they ought to take care, in all these respects, not to satiate themselves with the world, if they wish to advance with speed to the kingdom of Christ. The single word *watch*—which we find in *Matthew*—denotes that uninterrupted attention which keeps our minds in full activity, and makes us pass through the world like pilgrims.

In the account given by *Mark*, the disciples are first enjoined to *take heed* lest, through carelessness or indolence, ruin overtake them; and next are commanded to *watch*, because various allurements of the flesh are continually creeping upon us, and lulling our minds to sleep. Next follows an exhortation to *prayer*, because it is necessary to seek elsewhere the supplies that are necessary for supporting our weakness. *Luke* dictates the very form of *prayer;* first, that God may be pleased to rescue us from so deep and intricate a labyrinth; and next, that he may present us safe and sound in presence of his Son; for we shall never be able to reach it but by miraculously escaping innumerable deaths. And as it was not enough to pass through the course of the present life by rising superior to all dangers, Christ places this as the most important, that we may be permitted to stand before his tribunal.

For you know not at what hour your Lord will come. It ought to be observed, that the uncertainty as to the time of Christ's coming—which almost all treat as an encouragement to sloth—ought to be felt by us to be an excitement to attention and watchfulness. God intended that it should be hidden from us, for the express purpose that we may keep diligent watch without the relaxation of a single hour. For

what would be the trial of faith and patience, if believers, after spending their whole life in ease, and indolence, and pleasure, were to prepare themselves within the space of three days for meeting Christ?

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXIV. 43. But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly have watched, and would not have permitted his house to be broken into. 44. Therefore, be you also ready; because the Son of man will come at an hour when you are not aware. 45. Who is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master hath appointed over his household, to give them food in due season? 46. Blessed is that servant, whom his master, when he cometh, shall find acting in this manner. 47. Verily I say to you, He will appoint him[1] over all his property. 48. But if that wicked servant shall say in his	XIII. 34. As a man[2] who is going abroad, and hath left his house, and hath given it in charge to his servants, and hath assigned to every man his work, and hath commanded the porter to watch. 35. Watch therefore; (for you know not when your Lord will come,[3] whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;) 36. Lest, when he shall come suddenly, he find you	XII. 35. Let your loins be girt, and your lamps burning; 36. And yourselves like men who wait for their master, till he shall return from the marriage, that, when he shall come and knock,[4] they may open to him immediately. 37. Blessed are those servants whom their lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Verily I tell you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down at table, and will come forward and serve them. 38. And if he shall come in the second watch, or if he shall come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39. But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly have watched, and would not have permitted his house to be broken into. 40. And therefore be you also ready; for the Son of man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him. 41. And Peter saith to him, Lord, sayest thou this parable to us, or likewise to all? 42. And the Lord said, Who is a faithful and wise steward, whom his master will appoint over his household, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? 43. Blessed is that servant, whom his master, when he cometh, shall find acting in this manner. 44. Verily I tell you, that he will appoint him over all that he possesses. 45. But if that servant shall say in his heart, My master delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants, and maids, and to eat and

[1] "Il le constituera, *ou, luy donnera en charge;*"—"he will appoint him, *or, will commit to his charge.*"

[2] "*C'est ainsi* comme si un homme, &c.; *ou, Le Fils de l'homme est tout un* comme si un homme," &c.—"*It is* as if a man, &c.; *or, The Son of man is all one* as if a man," &c.

[3] "Quand le Seigneur de la maison viendra;"—"when the Lord of the house will come."

[4] "Et frappera à la porte;"—"and shall knock at the gate."

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
heart, My master delayeth to come; 49. And shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and even to eat and drink with drunkards; 50. The master of that servant will come on a day when he doth not look for him, and at an hour when he is not aware; 51. And shall cut him off, and assign his portion with hypocrites: weeping and gnashing of teeth shall be there.	sleeping. 37. But what I say to you I say to all, Watch.	drink, and to be drunken; 46. The master of that servant will come on a day when he doth not expect him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him off, and assign his portion with the unfaithful. 47. But that servant, who knew his master's will, and did not make himself ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48. But he who knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much hath been given, much will be demanded from him, and to whom men have intrusted much, from him they will exact more. 49. I came to send a fire on the earth, and what do I wish, if it be already kindled?[1] 50. But I have to be baptized with a baptism, and how am I distressed till it be accomplished!

Matthew XXIV. 43. *If the householder had known.* Luke relates this discourse of Christ at a different place from Matthew; and we need not wonder at this, for in the twelfth chapter, where (as we have formerly explained) he collects out of various discourses a summary of doctrine, he inserts also this parable. Besides, he introduces a general preface, that the disciples should *wait for their master*, with their *loins girt*, and carrying *burning lamps* in their hands. To this statement corresponds the parable, which we shall soon afterwards find in Matthew, (xxv. 1–12,) about the *wise and foolish virgins.*

In a few words Christ glances rapidly at the manner in which believers ought to conduct their pilgrimage in the world; for first he contrasts the *girding of the loins* with sloth, and *burning lamps* with the darkness of ignorance. First, then, Christ enjoins the disciples to be ready and equipped for the journey, that they may pass rapidly through the world, and may seek no fixed abode or resting-place but in heaven. The warning is highly useful; for

[1] "Et que veux-je *plus* s'il est ja allumé? *ou, sinon qu'il soit allumé?*"—"And what do I wish *more*, if it be already kindled? *or*, And what do I wish *more than that* it be kindled?"

though ungodly men have likewise in their mouth this form of expression, "the course of life," yet we see how they lay themselves down in the world, and remain unmoved in their attachment to it. But God does not bestow the honourable title of his children on any but those who acknowledge that they are strangers on the earth, and who not only are at all times prepared to leave it, but likewise move forward, in an uninterrupted "course," towards the heavenly life. Again, as they are surrounded on all sides by darkness, so long as they remain in the world, he furnishes them with *lamps*, as persons who are to perform a journey during the night. The first recommendation is, to run vigorously; and the next is, to have clear information as to the road, that believers may not weary themselves to no purpose by going astray; for otherwise it would be better to stumble in the way, than to perform a journey in uncertainty and mistake. As to the expression, *girding the loins*, it is borrowed from the ordinary custom of Eastern nations in wearing long garments.

Luke XII. 36. *And you yourselves like men that wait for their master.* He uses another parable not mentioned by Matthew, who writes more briefly on this subject; for he compares himself to *a householder* who, while he is joining in the festivities of the marriage-feast, or in other respects indulging in pleasure, out of his own house, wishes *his servants* to conduct themselves with modesty and sobriety at home, attending to their lawful occupations, and diligently waiting for his return. Now though the Son of God has departed to the blessed rest of heaven, and is absent from us, yet as he has assigned to every one his duty, it would be improper for us to give way to indolent repose. Besides, as he has promised that he will return to us, we ought to hold ourselves prepared, at every moment, to receive him, that he may not *find us sleeping*. For if a mortal man looks upon it as a duty which *his servants* owe him, that, *at whatever hour he returns home*, they shall be prepared to receive him, how much more has he a right to demand from his followers that they shall be sober and vigilant, and always wait for his coming? To excite them to greater alacrity, he mentions

that earthly masters are so delighted with such promptitude on the part of their servants, that they even *serve them;* not that all *masters* are accustomed to act in this manner, but because it does sometimes happen that a *master*, who is kind and gentle, admits his *servants* to his own table, as if they were his companions.

Yet it may be asked, Since Scripture calls us in many passages *children of light*, (Eph. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 5,) and since the Lord also shines upon us by his word, so that we walk as at noon, how does the Lord compare our life to the watches of the night? But we ought to seek the solution of this difficulty from the words of Peter, who tells us, that the word of God shines like a burning lamp, to enable us distinctly to see our road in a dark place. We ought therefore to attend to both statements, that our journey must be performed amidst the thick darkness of the world, and yet we are protected from the risk of going astray, while the torch of heavenly doctrine goes before us, more especially when we have Christ himself for a sun.

Matthew XXIV. 43. *But know this.* Another similitude is now employed by Christ, in exhorting his disciples to keep diligent watch; for if any person shall hear that robbers are prowling in the night, fear and suspicion will not allow him to sleep. Since, therefore, we are informed that Christ's coming will be sudden and unexpected, like that of a robber, and since we are expressly forewarned that we must always watch, lest he come upon us when asleep, and we be swallowed up with the ungodly, there is no excuse for our indolence; more especially since there is reason to dread not only a breach of the wall, and a loss of our property, but a deadly wound to ruin our soul, unless we are on our guard. The tendency of these words therefore is, that the warning of Christ should arouse us; for, though the last judgment be delayed for a long time, yet it hangs over us every hour; and, therefore, when there is ground for alarm, and when danger is near, it is unreasonable that we should be sluggish.

45. *Who is the faithful and wise servant?* This passage is more distinctly explained by Luke, who inserts *Peter's* question, which gave rise to a new parable. Christ having declared that the suddenness and uncertainty of his coming led to such danger as left no room for sloth, *Peter* asked, if this doctrine was general, or if it belonged to the twelve alone. For the disciples—as we have formerly seen—were always in the habit of thinking that they were unjustly treated, unless they were exempted from the common lot, and greatly excelled all others. When our Lord now represents to them a condition which is far from being pleasant or desirable, they look around them on every hand, like persons astonished. But the object of Christ's reply is, to show that, if each of the common people ought to watch, much less ought it to be endured that the apostles should be asleep. As Christ had formerly exhorted the whole family in general to watch for his coming, so now he demands extraordinary care from the principal servants, who had been appointed over others for the purpose of pointing out, by their example, the path of sobriety, watchfulness, and strict temperance. By these words he reminds them that they were not elevated to high rank for the purpose of indulging in ease, indolence, and pleasure; but that, the higher the rank of honour which they had obtained, the heavier was the burden which was laid on them; and therefore he declares that it is especially demanded from such persons that they exercise fidelity and wisdom.

Let all who are called to an honourable office learn from this, that they are so much the more strongly bound, not only to bestow their labour faithfully, but to strive with their utmost zeal and industry to discharge their duty. For while it is enough for ordinary servants to go through their daily toil, stewards, whose office embraces the care of the whole family, ought to go much farther. Otherwise Christ charges them with ingratitude, because, while they have been chosen before others, they do not answer to their honour; for why does our Lord prefer them to the rest, but in order that they may excel all by extraordinary fidelity and wisdom? True, indeed, all are enjoined, without exception,

to be sober, and to give earnest attention, but drowsiness would be peculiarly disgraceful and inexcusable in pastors. He next holds out even the hope of a reward to encourage them to diligence.

48. *But if that wicked servant shall say in his heart.* By these words, Christ briefly points out the source of that carelessness which creeps upon wicked servants. It is because they trust to a longer delay, and thus of their own accord involve themselves in darkness. They imagine that the day when they must render an account will never come; and, under the pretext of Christ's absence, they promise themselves that they will remain unpunished. For it is impossible but that the expectation of him, when it does occur to our minds, shall shake off sleep, and still more, that it shall restrain us from being carried away by wicked sensuality. No excitement of exhortation, therefore, can be more powerful or efficacious, than to represent to us that rigid tribunal which no man will be able to escape. That each of us may be careful to discharge his duty earnestly, and keep himself strictly and modestly within his own limits, let us constantly make our minds familiar with the thought of that last and sudden coming of the Lord, the neglect of which leads the reprobate to indulge in wickedness.

At the same time, Christ takes a passing glance at the ease with which insolence grows, when a man has once shaken off the bridle, and given himself up to sinning. For Christ does not represent to us a servant who is merely dissolute and worthless, but one who rises up in an outrageous manner to disturb the whole house, who wickedly abuses the power committed to him, exercises cruelty on his fellow-servants, and wastefully spends the property of his master, whom he treats with open ridicule. Lastly, to excite terror, he adds the punishment, which is of no ordinary degree; for severe punishment is due to such unbounded wickedness.

Luke XII. 47. *But that servant.* There is great weight in this circumstance, which is mentioned by Luke alone, that, in proportion as any man knowingly and willingly takes

pleasure in despising the Lord, he deserves severer punishment. A comparison is made between the greater and the less to this effect: If punishment does not fail to be inflicted on a *servant* who errs through mistake, what shall become of the *wicked* and rebellious *servant*, who purposely, as it were, tramples under foot the authority of his master? It ought to be remembered, however, that those who are appointed to govern the Church do not err through ignorance, but basely and wickedly defraud their Master of his right.

Yet we ought to gather from this passage a general doctrine, that it is in vain for men to betake themselves to the plea of ignorance, in order to be freed from condemnation. For if a mortal man claims the right of demanding from his servants that they shall inquire into his will, so that nothing may be done in his house in a heedless or confused manner; how much greater authority belongs to the Son of God, that they who serve him should be earnestly desirous to be informed about his injunctions, and not rush forward, at their own pleasure, to act in a state of uncertainty, but depend wholly on the intimations of his will; particularly when he has prescribed what we ought to do, and always gives us a gracious answer, when we ask his direction? It is certain, that our ignorance is always accompanied by gross and shameful negligence. We see, indeed, that it is in vain to resort to this subterfuge, that he who has gone wrong through ignorance is not in fault; for, on the contrary, the Heavenly Judge declares, that though such offenders are visited by lighter chastisement, yet they will not be altogether unpunished. And if even ignorance does not excuse men, how dreadful is the vengeance that awaits deliberate transgressors, who with outrageous violence provoke God, in opposition to the dictates of their conscience? The more abundant the instruction, therefore, which any man has received, so much the greater is the ground for punishment, if he be not obedient and submissive. Hence it appears how trifling and worthless is the excuse of those who, now rejecting the plain doctrine of the Gospel, endeavour to screen such obstinacy by the ignorance of their fathers; as if ignorance were an adequate shield to ward off the judgment

of God. But granting that faults committed through mistake were pardoned, it would be highly unreasonable that the same favour should be extended to those who sin wilfully, since with deliberate malice they rage against God.

48. *To whomsoever much hath been given.* Christ shows by another circumstance, that the more highly favoured disciples ought to be visited with severer punishment, if they despise their calling, and abandon themselves without reserve to every kind of licentiousness; because the more eminent a man is, he ought to consider that so much the more has been intrusted to him, and on the express condition that he shall one day render an account of it. In the same proportion, therefore, as any of us is endued with higher gifts, if he does not, like a field which has been cultivated at greater expense, yield to the Lord more abundant produce, the abuse of that grace which he has profaned, or uselessly withheld, will cost him dear.

49. *I am come to send fire on the earth.* From these concluding words it may easily be inferred, that this was one of Christ's latest discourses, and is not related by Luke at the proper place. But the meaning is, that Christ has introduced into the world the utmost confusion, as if he had intended to mingle heaven and earth. The gospel is metaphorically compared to *fire*, because it violently changes the face of things. The disciples having falsely imagined that, while they were at ease and asleep, the kingdom of God would come, Christ declares, on the contrary, that there must first be a dreadful conflagration to kindle the world. And as some beginnings of it were even then making their appearance, Christ encourages the disciples by this very consideration, that they already feel the power of the gospel. "When great commotions," says he, "shall already begin to kindle, this is so far from being a reason why you should tremble, that it is rather a ground of strong confidence; and, for my own part, I rejoice that this fruit of my labours is visible." In like manner, all the ministers of the gospel ought to apply this to themselves, that, when there are troubles in the world, they may be more

diligently employed in their duty. It is proper to observe, also, that the same fire of doctrine, when it burns on all sides, consumes chaff and straw, but purifies silver and gold.

50. *But I have a baptism to be baptized with.* By these words our Lord asserts that there remains nothing but his last act, that by his death he may consecrate the renovation of the world. For since the shaking which he mentioned was appalling, and since that conflagration of the human race was terrific, he is about to show that the first-fruits must be offered in his own person, after which the disciples ought not to be displeased at feeling some portion of it. He compares death—as in other passages—to *baptism*, (Rom. vi. 4,) because the children of God, after having been immersed for a time by the death of the body, shortly afterwards rise again to life, so that death is nothing else than a passage through the midst of the waters. He says that he is *sorely pressed till that baptism has been accomplished*, that he may encourage every one of us, by his example, both to bear the cross and to prefer death. Not that any man can have a natural preference for death, or for any abatement of present happiness, but because, when we contemplate on the farther bank the glory, and the blessed and immortal rest of heaven, we not only suffer death with patience, but are even carried forward by eager desire where faith and hope lead us.

Matthew.

XXV. 1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3. They that were foolish, while they took their lamps, took no oil with them: 4. But the wise took oil in their vessels along with their lamps. 5. And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6. And at midnight a cry arose, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go you out to meet him. 7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8. And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. 9. But the wise answered, saying, By no means, lest there be not enough for you and for us;[1] but go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10. And

[1] "De peur que nous n'en ayons point assez pour nous et pour vous;" —"lest we have not enough of it for us and for you."

while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. 11. And afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12. But he answering said, Verily I tell you, I know you not. 13. Watch, therefore, for you know not the day nor the hour in which the Son of man shall come.

Though this exhortation—as will appear from the conclusion of it—has nearly the same object with the former, yet it is properly added, in order to confirm believers in perseverance. Our Lord knew how strongly the nature of men is inclined to idleness, and how, for the most part, they not only grow weary after a great lapse of time, but give way through sudden dislike. To remedy this disease, he taught his disciples that they were not duly fortified, unless they had sufficient perseverance for a long period. When this is ascertained to be the design of the parable, we ought not to trouble ourselves much with minute investigations, which have nothing to do with what Christ intended. Some people give themselves a good deal of uneasiness about *the lamps, the vessels, and the oil;* but the plain and natural meaning of the whole is, that it is not enough to have ardent zeal for a short time, if we have not also a constancy that never tires. And Christ employs a very appropriate parable to express this. A little before, he had exhorted the disciples, that as they had a journey to perform through dark and dreary places, they should provide themselves with *lamps;* but as the wick of the lamp, if it be not supplied with oil, gradually dries up, and loses its brightness, Christ now says, that believers need to have incessant supplies of courage, to support the flame which is kindled in their hearts, otherwise their zeal will fail ere they have completed the journey.

Matthew XXV. 1. *Then shall the kingdom of heaven.* By this term is meant the condition of the future Church, which was to be collected by the authority and direction of Christ. He employs this remarkable title, that believers may not deceive themselves by an erroneous opinion that they have arrived at absolute perfection. The parable is borrowed from

the ordinary custom of life; for it was a childish speculation of *Jerome* and others, to adduce this passage in praise of *virginity;* while Christ had no other object in view than to lessen the uneasiness which they might be apt to feel in consequence of the delay of his coming. He says, therefore, that he asks nothing more from us than is usually done for friends at a marriage-feast. The custom was, that *virgins*—who are tender and delicate—should, by way of respect, accompany *the bridegroom* to his chamber. But the general instruction of the parable consists in this, that it is not enough to have been once ready and prepared for the discharge of duty, if we do not persevere to the end.

2. *Five were wise.* Towards the close of the former chapter, our Lord specially required *stewards* to be *wise,* (Matth. xxiv. 45;) for it is reasonable, that the heavier the charge which any man sustains, and the more important the matters in which he is employed, the *wisdom* with which he conducts himself should be the greater. But now he demands *wisdom* from all the children of God in general, that they may not, through inconsiderate rashness, expose themselves to be the prey of Satan. Now this kind of *wisdom* he describes by saying, that they are to provide themselves with the supplies necessary for completing the course of their life. For the warmth of our impatience makes us look upon the time, however short, as far too long protracted; and next, our poverty is such, that we need supplies for every hour.

5. *And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* Some interpret this slumbering in a bad sense, as if believers, along with others, abandoned themselves to sloth, and were asleep amidst the vanities of the world; but this is altogether inconsistent with the intention of Christ, and with the structure of the parable. There would be greater probability in explaining it to denote death, which overtakes believers before the coming of Christ; for it is not at that time only that we must look for salvation, but also when we have left the world and are sleeping in Christ. But I take it more simply as denoting earthly occupations, in which

believers must be engaged, so long as they dwell in the body; and, though forgetfulness of the kingdom of God ought never to steal upon them, yet the distracting influence of the occupations of this world is not inappropriately compared to *sleep*. For they cannot be so constantly occupied with the thought of meeting Christ, as not to be distracted, or retarded, or entangled by a variety of cares, in consequence of which, while they watch, they are partly asleep.

6. *At midnight a cry arose.* With respect to the *cry*, I view it as taken metaphorically for his sudden arrival; for we know, that when any thing new and unexpected happens, men are wont to make a loud noise. True, indeed, our Lord *cries* daily, that *he will come quickly*, (Rev. xxii. 20;) but at that time, the whole frame of the world will resound with the *cry*, and his dreadful majesty will fill heaven and earth in such a manner, as not only to awaken those who are *asleep*, but to bring the dead *out of their graves*, (John v. 28.)

8. *And the foolish said to the wise.* This is a reproof of the late repentance of those who never think of what they are in want of, till *the door is shut* against every remedy. For those who do not make provision for a long period are charged with folly, because they are careless, and flatter themselves amidst their poverty, and allow the season of mutual intercourse to pass in such a way as to despise the aids which were offered to them. As they do not, in proper time, bethink themselves about procuring oil, Christ, mocking the knowledge which they have acquired when it is too late, shows how their stupidity will be punished, when they shall see themselves to be empty and unprovided, while there is no remedy.

9. *Lest there be not enough for you and us.* We know that the Lord distributes his gifts so variously to each, according to his measure, in order that they may give mutual aid to each other, and may employ for the general advantage what has been intrusted to each individual; and that in this way is preserved the sacred connection which exists among the

members of the Church. But Christ here points out the time when he shall summon all men to his tribunal, each carrying his bundle, that he may bring with him according as he has done in his body. That portion of grace received, which every man has laid up for himself, is, therefore, justly compared to a stock of provisions for a journey, which *would not be enough* for a greater number of persons.

But rather go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. These words immediately follow, and are not intended as an admonition, but a reproof; and the meaning is: "There once was a time for *buying*, which you ought not to have neglected; for *oil* was at that time offered for sale, but the means of obtaining it are now withdrawn." And yet it is foolish in the Papists to infer from this, that by our own virtues or industry we obtain the gift of perseverance. For the word *buy* does not at all imply that a price has been given; as appears clearly from the passage in Isaiah, (lv. 1,) where the Lord, while he invites us *to buy*, demands no price, but informs us, that he has *wine and milk in abundance*, to be gratuitously bestowed. There is no other way of obtaining it, therefore, but to receive by faith what is offered to us.

10. *And the door was shut.* At length it follows that *the door* of the heavenly kingdom *will be shut* against all who have not made provision, because they failed in the middle of the course. We must not enter here into minute inquiries, how it is that Christ says that *the foolish virgins* WENT TO BUY; for it means nothing else than that all who shall not be ready at the very moment when they shall be called will be *shut out* from entering into heaven.

MATTHEW.	LUKE.
XXV. 31. Now when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32. And all the nations shall be assembled before him; and he shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. 33. And he shall place the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left. 34. Then will the King say to those who shall be on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the	XXI. 37. And he taught in the temple by day; but at night he went out, and lodged in the mountain, which is called

MATTHEW. LUKE.

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you received me kindly; 36. I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. 37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38. And when did we see thee a stranger, and received thee kindly? or naked, and clothed thee? 39. Or when did we see thee sick, or in prison, and came to thee? 40. And the King answering will say to them, Verily I tell you, So far as you did it to one of these my brethren, you did it to me. 41. Then will he say also to those who shall be on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels: 42. For I was hungry, and you gave me no food; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink: 43. I was a stranger, and you did not receive me kindly; I was naked, and you did not clothe me; I was sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me. 44. Then will they also answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not assist thee? 45. Then will he answer them, saying, Verily I tell you, So far as you did it not to any of the least of these, you did it not to me. 46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into everlasting life.[1]

the mountain of Olives. 38. And early in the morning all the people came to him, to hear him in the temple.

Matthew XXV. 31. *Now when the Son of man shall come in his glory.* Christ follows out the same doctrine, and what he formerly described under parables, he now explains clearly and without figures. The sum of what is said is, that believers, in order to encourage themselves to a holy and upright conduct, ought to contemplate with the eyes of faith the heavenly life, which, though it is now concealed, will at length be manifested at the last coming of Christ. For, when he declares that, *when he shall come with the angels, then will he sit on the throne of his glory*, he contrasts this last revelation with the disorders and agitations of earthly warfare; as if he had said, that he did not appear for the purpose of immediately setting up his kingdom, and therefore that there was need of hope and patience, lest the disciples might be discouraged by long delay. Hence we infer that

[1] "*Mais les justes* iront;"—"*but the righteous* will go."

this was again added, in order that the disciples, being freed from mistake about immediate and sudden happiness, might keep their minds in warfare till Christ's second coming, and might not give way, or be discouraged, on account of his absence.

This is the reason why he says that he will then assume the title of King; for though he commenced his reign on the earth, and now sits at the right hand of the Father, so as to exercise the supreme government of heaven and earth; yet he has not yet erected before the eyes of men that *throne*, from which his divine majesty will be far more fully displayed than it now is at the last day; for that *glory*, of which we now obtain by faith nothing more than a taste, will then have its full effect. So then Christ now sits on his heavenly throne, as far as it is necessary that he shall reign for restraining his enemies and protecting the Church; but *then* he will appear openly, to establish perfect order in heaven and earth, to crush his enemies under his feet, to assemble his believing people to partake of an everlasting and blessed life, to ascend his judgment-seat; and, in a word, there will be a visible manifestation of the reason why the kingdom was given to him by the Father. He says that *he will come in his glory;* because, while he dwelt in this world as a mortal man, he appeared in the despised form of a servant. And he calls it HIS *glory*, though he elsewhere ascribes it to *his Father*, but the meaning is the same; for he means simply the divine glory, which at that time shone in the Father only, for in himself it was concealed.[1]

32. *And all nations shall be assembled before him.* He employs large and splendid titles for extolling his kingdom, that the disciples may learn to expect a different kind of happiness from what they had imagined. For they were satisfied with this single consideration, that their nation was delivered from the miseries with which it was then oppressed, so that it would be manifest that God had not in vain established his covenant with Abraham and his posterity. But

[1] "Pource qu'en Christ elle estoit cachee et ne se monstroit;"—"because in Christ it was concealed, and was not exhibited."

Christ extends much farther the benefit of the redemption brought by him, for he will be the Judge of the whole world. Again, in order to persuade believers to holiness of life, he assures them that the good and the bad will not share alike; because he will bring with him the reward which is laid up for both. In short, he declares that his kingdom will be fully established, when the righteous shall have obtained a crown of glory, and when the wicked shall have received the reward which they deserved.

As a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. When our Lord says that the *separation of the sheep from the goats* is delayed till that day, he means that the wicked are now mixed with the good and holy, so that they live together in the same flock of God. The comparison appears to be borrowed from Ezekiel xxxiv. 18, where the Lord complains of the fierceness of *the goats*, which attack with their horns the poor *sheep*, and destroy the pastures, and pollute the water; and where the Lord expressly declares that he will take vengeance. And therefore Christ's discourse amounts to this, that believers ought not to think their condition too hard, if they are now compelled to live with *the goats*, and even to sustain many serious attacks and annoyances from them; secondly, that they ought to beware of being themselves infected by the contagion of their vices; and, thirdly, to inform them that in a holy and innocent life their labour is not thrown away, for the difference will one day appear.

34. *Come, you blessed of my Father.* We must remember Christ's design; for he bids his disciples rest satisfied now with hope, that they may with patience and tranquillity of mind look for the enjoyment of the heavenly kingdom; and next, he bids them strive earnestly, and not become wearied in the right course. To this latter clause he refers, when he promises the inheritance of the heavens to none but those who by good works aim at the prize of the heavenly calling. But before speaking of the reward of good works, he points out, in passing, that the commencement of salvation flows from a higher source; for by calling them *blessed of the Father*, he reminds them, that their salvation proceeded from the

undeserved favour of God. Among the Hebrews the phrase *blessed of God* means one who is *dear to God*, or *beloved by God*. Besides, this form of expression was not only employed by believers to extol the grace of God towards men, but those who had degenerated from true godliness still held this principle. *Enter, thou blessed of God*, said Laban to Abraham's servant, (Gen. xxiv. 31.) We see that nature suggested to them this expression, by which they ascribed to God the praise of all that they possessed. There can be no doubt, therefore, that Christ, in describing the salvation of the godly, begins with the undeserved love of God, by which those who, under the guidance of the Spirit in this life, aim at righteousness, were predestinated to life.

To this also relates what he says shortly afterwards, that *the kingdom*, to the possession of which they will be appointed at the last day, *had been prepared for them from the beginning of the world*. For though it may be easy to object, that the reward was laid up with a view to their future merits, any person who will candidly examine the words must acknowledge that there is an implied commendation of the grace of God. Nay more, Christ does not simply invite believers to possess *the kingdom*, as if they had obtained it by their merits, but expressly says that it is bestowed on them as heirs.

Yet we must observe another object which our Lord had in view. For though the life of the godly be nothing else than a sad and wretched banishment, so that the earth scarcely bears them; though they groan under hard poverty, and reproaches, and other afflictions; yet, that they may with fortitude and cheerfulness surmount these obstacles, the Lord declares that a *kingdom* is elsewhere *prepared for them*. It is no slight persuasive to patience, when men are fully convinced that they do not run in vain; and therefore, lest our minds should be cast down by the pride of the ungodly, in which they give themselves unrestrained indulgence,—lest our hope should even be weakened by our own afflictions, let us always remember the inheritance which awaits us in heaven; for it depends on no uncertain event, but was *prepared for us* by God before we were born,—*prepared*, I say,

for each of the elect, for the persons here addressed by Christ are the *blessed of the Father.*

When it is here said only that *the kingdom was prepared from the beginning of the world*, while it is said, in another passage, that it was prepared before the creation of heaven and of earth, (Eph. i. 4,) this involves no inconsistency. For Christ does not here fix the precise time when the inheritance of eternal life was appointed for the sons of God, but only reminds us of God's fatherly care, with which he embraced us before we were born; and confirms the certainty of our hope by this consideration, that our life can sustain no injury from the commotions and agitations of the world.

35. *For I was hungry.* If Christ were now speaking of the cause of our salvation, the Papists could not be blamed for inferring that we merit eternal life by good works; but as Christ had no other design than to exhort his people to holy and upright conduct, it is improper to conclude from his words what is the value of the merits of works. With regard to the stress which they lay on the word *for*, as if it pointed out the *cause*, it is a weak argument; for we know that, when eternal life is promised to the righteous, the word *for* does not always denote a cause, but rather the order of procedure.[1] But we have another reply to offer, which is still more clear; for we do not deny that a reward is promised to good works, but maintain that it is a reward of grace, because it depends on adoption. Paul boasts (2 Tim. iv. 8) that *a crown of righteousness is laid up for him;* but whence did he derive that confidence but because he was a member of Christ, who alone is *heir* of the heavenly kingdom? He openly avows that *the righteous Judge will give to him that crown;* but whence did he obtain that prize but because by grace he was adopted, and received that justification of which we are all destitute? We must therefore hold these two principles, first, that believers are called to the possession of the king-

[1] "Elle ne touche pas tousjours la cause et le fondement de salut, mais plustost l'ordre et la procedure que Dieu y tient;"—"it does not always refer to the cause and foundation of salvation, but rather to the order and procedure which God observes in regard to it."

dom of heaven, so far as relates to good works, not because they deserved them through the righteousness of works, or because their own minds prompted them to obtain that righteousness, but because God justifies those whom he previously elected, (Rom. viii. 30.) Secondly, although by the guidance of the Spirit they aim at the practice of righteousness, yet as they never fulfil the law of God, no reward is due to them, but the term *reward* is applied to that which is bestowed by grace.

Christ does not here specify every thing that belongs to a pious and holy life, but only, by way of example, refers to some of the duties of charity, by which we give evidence that we fear God. For though the worship of God is more important than charity towards men, and though, in like manner, faith and supplication are more valuable than alms, yet Christ had good reasons for bringing forward those evidences of true righteousness which are more obvious. If a man were to take no thought about God, and were only to be beneficent towards men, such compassion would be of no avail to him for appeasing God, who had all the while been defrauded of his right. Accordingly, Christ does not make the chief part of righteousness to consist in alms, but, by means of what may be called more evident signs, shows what it is to live a holy and righteous life; as unquestionably believers not only profess with the mouth, but prove by actual performances, that they serve God.

Most improperly, therefore, do fanatics, under the pretext of this passage, withdraw from hearing the word, and from observing the Holy Supper, and from other spiritual exercises; for with equal plausibility might they set aside faith, and bearing the cross, and prayer, and chastity. But nothing was farther from the design of Christ than to confine to a portion of the second table of the Law that rule of life which is contained in the two tables. The monks and other noisy talkers had as little reason to imagine that there are only six works of *mercy*, because Christ does not mention any more; as if it were not obvious, even to children, that he commends, by means of a *synecdoche*, all the duties of charity. For to comfort mourners, to relieve those who are unjustly oppressed,

to aid simple-minded men by advice, to deliver wretched persons from the jaws of wolves, are deeds of *mercy* not less worthy of commendation than to clothe the naked or to feed the hungry.

But while Christ, in recommending to us the exercise of charity, does not exclude those duties which belong to the worship of God, he reminds his disciples that it will be an authentic evidence of a holy life, if they practise charity, agreeably to those words of the prophet, *I choose mercy, and not sacrifice*, (Hosea vi. 6;) the import of which is, that hypocrites, while they are avaricious, and cruel, and deceitful, and extortioners, and haughty, still counterfeit holiness by an imposing array of ceremonies. Hence also we infer, that if we desire to have our life approved by the Supreme Judge, we must not go astray after our own inventions, but must rather consider what it is that He chiefly requires from us. For all who shall depart from his commandments, though they toil and wear themselves out in works of their own contrivance, will hear it said to them at the last day, *Who hath required those things at your hands?* (Isa. i. 12.)

37. *Then will the righteous answer him.* Christ represents the righteous as doubting—what they know well—his willingness to form a just estimate of what is done to men.[1] But as this was not so deeply impressed on their minds as it ought to have been, he holds out to them this lively representation.[2] For how comes it that we are so slow and reluctant to acts of beneficence, but because that promise is not truly engraven on our hearts, that God will one day repay with usury what we bestow on the poor? The admiration which Christ here expresses is intended to instruct us to rise above the apprehension of our flesh, whenever afflicted brethren ask our confidence and aid, that the aspect of a despised man may not hinder us from treating him with kindness.

[1] "La charité qu'on exerce envers les hommes;"—"the charity which is exercised towards men."

[2] "Il leur represente au vif, tout ainsi que si la chose se faisoit devant leurs yeux;"—"he represents it to them in a lively manner, quite as if the thing were done before their eyes."

40. *Verily I tell you.* As Christ has just now told us, by a figure, that our senses do not yet comprehend how highly he values deeds of charity, so now he openly declares, that he will reckon as done to himself whatever we have bestowed on his people. We must be prodigiously sluggish, if compassion be not drawn from our bowels by this statement, that Christ is either neglected or honoured in the person of those who need our assistance. So then, whenever we are reluctant to assist the poor, let us place before our eyes the Son of God, to whom it would be base sacrilege to refuse any thing. By these words he likewise shows, that he acknowledges those acts of kindness which have been performed gratuitously, and without any expectation of a reward. And certainly, when he enjoins us to do good to the *hungry* and *naked*, to *strangers* and *prisoners*, from whom nothing can be expected in return, we must look to him, who freely lays himself under obligation to us, and allows us to place to his account what might otherwise appear to have been lost.

So far as you have done it to one of the least of my brethren. Believers only are expressly recommended to our notice; not that he bids us altogether despise others, but because the more nearly a man approaches to God, he ought to be the more highly esteemed by us; for though there is a common tie that binds all the children of Adam, there is a still more sacred union among the children of God. So then, as those who belong to the household of faith ought to be preferred to strangers, Christ makes special mention of them. And though his design was, to encourage those whose wealth and resources are abundant to relieve the poverty of brethren, yet it affords no ordinary consolation to the poor and distressed, that, though shame and contempt follow them in the eyes of the world, yet the Son of God holds them as dear as his own members. And certainly, by calling them *brethren*, he confers on them inestimable honour.

41. *Depart from me, you cursed.* He now comes to the reprobate, who are so intoxicated by their fading prosperity, that they imagine they will always be happy. He threatens, therefore, that he will come as their Judge, and that he will

make them forget those luxurious enjoyments to which they are now so entirely devoted; not that the coming of Christ will strike them with terror—for they think that they *have made a covenant with death*, (Isa. xxviii. 15,) and harden themselves in wicked indifference—but that believers, warned of their dreadful ruin, may not envy their present lot. For as promises are necessary for us, to excite and encourage us to holiness of life, so threatenings are likewise necessary to restrain us by anxiety and fear. We are therefore taught how desirable it is to be united to the Son of God; because everlasting destruction and the torment of the flesh await all those whom he will drive from his presence at the last day. He will then order the wicked to *depart* from him, because many hypocrites are now mixed with the righteous, as if they were closely allied to Christ.

Into everlasting fire. We have stated formerly,[1] that the term *fire* represents metaphorically that dreadful punishment which our senses are unable to comprehend. It is therefore unnecessary to enter into subtle inquiries, as the sophists do, into the materials or form of this *fire;* for there would be equally good reason to inquire about the *worm*, which Isaiah connects with the *fire: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched*, (Isa. lxvi. 24.) Besides, the same prophet shows plainly enough in another passage that the expression is metaphorical; for he compares *the Spirit of God* to a blast by which the *fire* is kindled, and adds a mixture of *brimstone*, (Isa. xxx. 33.) Under these words, therefore, we ought to represent to our minds the future vengeance of God against the wicked, which, being more grievous than all earthly torments, ought rather to excite horror than a desire to know it. But we must observe the *eternity* of this *fire*, as well as of the glory which, a little before, was promised to believers.

Which is prepared for the devil. Christ contrasts with himself *the devil*, as the head of all the reprobate. For though all the *devils* are apostate angels, yet many passages of Scripture assign the highest authority to one who assembles under

[1] *Harmony*, vol. i. p. 200; vol. ii. p. 124.

him, as in one body, all the wicked to perdition; in the same manner as believers assemble to life under Christ, and *grow* under him, till, having reached *perfection*, they are entirely united by him to God, (Eph. iv. 13; Col. ii. 19.) But now Christ says, that hell is *prepared for the devil*, that wicked men may not entertain the belief that they will be able to escape it, when they hear that they are involved in the same punishment with *the devil*, who, it is certain, was long ago sentenced and condemned to hell, without any hope of deliverance.

And his angels. By *the devil's angels* some understand wicked men, but it is more probable that Christ speaks only of *devils*. And so these words convey an indirect reproach, that men, who had been called to the hope of salvation through the Gospel, chose to perish with Satan, and, rejecting the Author of salvation, voluntarily threw themselves into this wretched condition; not that they were not appointed to destruction as well as *the devil*, but because in their crime is plainly seen the cause of their destruction, when they reject the grace of their calling. And thus, though the reprobate were devoted to death, by a secret judgment of God, before they were born, yet, so long as life is offered to them, they are not reckoned heirs of death or companions of Satan, but their perdition, which had been formerly concealed, is discovered and made evident by their unbelief.

44. *Then shall they also answer him.* The same kind of striking delineation which Christ had formerly employed is now repeated, in order to inform the reprobate, that their vain excuses, by which they now deceive themselves, will be of no avail to them at the last day. For whence comes the great cruelty of their pride towards the poor, but because they think that they will not be punished for despising them? To destroy this self-complacency, our Lord gives them warning, that they will one day feel—but when it will be too late—what they do not now deign to consider, that those who are now so greatly despised are not less esteemed by Christ than his own members.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVI. 1. And it happened, when Jesus had finished all these discourses, he said to his disciples, 2. You know that after two days is the passover; and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3. Then were assembled the chief priests, and scribes, and elders of the people, in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4. And entered into consultation how they would take Jesus by stratagem, and kill him. 5. But they said, Not during the festival, lest there be a commotion among the people. 6. And when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, 7. A woman came to him, having an alabaster-box of precious ointment, and poured it on his head, while he sat at table. 8. And his disciples, when they saw it, were angry, saying, Why is this waste? 9. For this ointment might have been sold for a great price, and given to the poor. 10. But Jesus, knowing this, said to them, Why do you trouble the woman? for she hath performed a good action towards me. 11. For you have the poor always with you, but me you have not always.[1] 12. For as to this ointment which this woman hath poured on my body, she did it to bury me. 13. Verily I tell you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also which she hath done will be told in remembrance of her.	XIV. 1. And after two days was the passover, and the feast of unleavened bread; and the chief priests and scribes sought how they would seize him by craft, and kill him. 2. But they said, Not during the festival, lest there be a commotion among the people. 3. And while he was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, while he sat at table, a woman came, having an alabaster-box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she broke the box, and poured it on his head. 4. And there were some who were angry within themselves, and said, Why is this waste of the ointment? 5. For this might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii,[2] and given to the poor. And they murmured against her. 6. But Jesus said, Let her alone: why do you trouble her? she hath performed a good action towards me. 7. For you have the poor always with you, and whenever you choose, you may do good to them; but me you have not always.[1] 8. She hath done what she could; she hath come beforehand, to anoint my body to the burying. 9. Verily I tell you, Wheresoever this gospel hath been preached throughout the whole world, this also which she hath done shall be told in remembrance of her.	XXII. 1. Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, was at hand. 2. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they dreaded the people.

[1] "Mais vous ne m'aurez point tousjours;"—"but you will not have me always."

[2] Reckoning silver at five shillings an ounce, a *denarius*, which weighed a *drachm*, was worth *sevenpence-halfpenny*; and *three hundred denarii* were equal to *nine* pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence, of our money.—*Ed.*

Christ now confirms again what we have seen that he had sometimes predicted to his disciples; but this last prediction clearly shows how willingly he offered himself to die; and it was necessary that he should do so, because God could not be appeased but by a sacrifice of obedience. He intended, at the same time, to prevent the disciples from taking offence, lest they might be altogether discouraged by the thought that he was dragged to death by necessity. Two purposes were thus served by this statement: to testify, first, that the Son of God willingly surrendered himself to die, in order to reconcile the world to the Father, (for in no other way could the guilt of sins have been expiated, or righteousness obtained for us;) and, secondly, that he did not die like one oppressed by violence, which he could not escape, but because he voluntarily offered himself to die. He therefore declares that he comes to Jerusalem with the express intention of suffering death there; for while he was at liberty to withdraw, and to dwell in a safe retreat till that time was come, he knowingly and wilfully comes forward at the exact time. And though it was of no advantage to the disciples to be informed, at that time, of the obedience which he was rendering to the Father, yet afterwards this doctrine tended in no small degree to the edification of their faith. In like manner, it is of singular utility to us at the present day, because we behold, as in a bright mirror, the voluntary sacrifice, by which all the transgressions of the world were blotted out, and, contemplating the Son of God advancing with cheerfulness and courage to death, we already behold him victorious over death.

Matthew XXVI. 3. *Then were assembled the chief priests.* Matthew does not mean that they assembled during the *two days*, but introduces this narrative to show, that Christ was not led by any opinion of man to fix the day of his death; for by what conjectures could he have been led to it, since his enemies themselves had resolved to delay for a time? The meaning therefore is, that by the spirit of prophecy he spoke of his own death, which no man could have suspected to be so near at hand. John explains the reason why the

scribes and priests held this meeting: it was because, from day to day, the people flocked to Christ in greater multitudes, (John xi. 48.) And at that time it was decided, at the instigation of *Caiaphas*, that he should be put to death, because they could not succeed against him in any other way.

5. *But they said, Not during the festival.* They did not think it a fit season, till *the festival* was past, and the crowd was dispersed. Hence we infer that, although those hungry dogs eagerly opened their mouths to devour Christ, or rather, rushed furiously upon him, still God withheld them, by a secret restraint, from doing any thing by their deliberation or at their pleasure. So far as lies in their power, they delay till another time; but, contrary to their wish, God hastens the hour. And it is of great importance for us to hold, that Christ was not unexpectedly dragged to death by the violence of his enemies, but was led to it by the providence of God; for our confidence in the propitiation is founded on the conviction that he was offered to God as that sacrifice which God had appointed from the beginning. And therefore he determined that his Son should be sacrificed on the very day of *the passover*, that the ancient figure might give place to the only sacrifice of eternal redemption. Those who had no other design in view than to ruin Christ thought that another time would be more appropriate; but God, who had appointed him to be a sacrifice for the expiation of sins, selected a suitable day for contrasting the body with its shadow, by placing them together. Hence also we obtain a brighter display of the fruit of Christ's suffering.

6. *And when Jesus was in Bethany.* What the Evangelist now relates had happened a little before Christ came to Jerusalem, but is here introduced seasonably, in order to inform us what was the occasion that suddenly drove the priests to make haste. They did not venture to attack Christ by open violence, and to oppress him by stratagem was no easy matter; but now that Judas suggests to them a plan of which they had not thought, the very facility of execution leads them to adopt a different opinion. As to

some slight diversity between John's narrative and that of Matthew and Mark, it is easy to remove the apparent inconsistency, which has led some commentators erroneously to imagine that it is a different narrative. John (xii. 3) expresses the name of the woman who anointed Christ, which is omitted by the other two Evangelists; but he does not mention the person who received Christ as a guest, while Matthew (xxvi. 6) and Mark (xiv. 3) expressly state that he was then at supper *in the house of Simon the leper*. As to its being said by John that his *feet* were *anointed*, while the other two Evangelists say that she *anointed his head*, this involves no contradiction. Unquestionably we know that *ointments* were not poured on the *feet;* but as it was then poured in greater abundance than usual, John, by way of amplification, informs us that Christ's very *feet* were moistened with the oil. Mark too relates, that *she broke the alabaster-box, and poured* the whole of the ointment *on his head;* and it agrees very well with this to say that it flowed down to his *feet*. Let us therefore hold it to be a settled point, that all the three Evangelists relate the same narrative.

8. *And when the disciples saw it.* This also is not unusual with the Evangelists, when a thing has been done by one, to attribute it to many persons, if they give their consent to it. John says that the *murmur* proceeded from *Judas, who betrayed Christ*, (John xii. 4.) Matthew and Mark include all the disciples along with him. The reason is, that none of the others would ever have dared to *murmur*, if the wicked slander of Judas had not served for a torch to kindle them. But when he began, under a plausible pretext, to condemn the expense as superfluous, all of them easily caught the contagion. And this example shows what danger arises from malignant and envenomed tongues; for even those who are naturally reasonable, and candid, and modest, if they do not exercise prudence and caution, are easily deceived by unfavourable speeches, nd led to adopt false judgments. But if light and foolish credulity induced the disciples of Christ to take part with *Judas*, what shall become of us, if we are too easy in admitting *murmurers*,

who are in the habit of carping wickedly at the best actions?

We ought to draw from it another warning, not to pronounce rashly on a matter which is not sufficiently known. The disciples seize on what *Judas* said, and, as it has some show of plausibility, they are too harsh in forming a judgment. They ought, on the contrary, to have inquired more fully if the action deserved reproof; more especially when their Master was present, by whose decision it was their duty to abide. Let us know, therefore, that we act improperly, when we form our opinion without paying regard to the word of God; for, as Paul informs us, *None of us liveth or dieth to himself, but all must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, where we must give our account*, (Rom. xiv. 7, 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.) And though there was a wide difference between *Judas* and the others—because he wickedly held out a plausible cloak for his theft, while the rest were actuated by foolish simplicity—still we see how their imprudence withdrew them from Christ, and made them the companions of *Judas*.

10. *Why do you trouble the woman?* It is wonderful that Christ, whose whole life was a rule and pattern of temperance and frugality, now approves of immoderate expense, which appears to have been closely allied to luxury and superfluous indulgence. But we must observe the kind of defence which he employs; for he does not maintain that the woman did right, in such a manner as if he wished that the same thing should be done every day, but maintains that what she had done in a single instance was agreeable to God, because it must have been done for a good reason. Though Christ had no desire for the use of the *ointment*, yet this *anointing* pleased him on account of the circumstances in which it happened. Hence we infer that certain extraordinary ways of acting are sometimes approved by God, and yet that it would be improper to make them an example. Nor have we any reason to doubt that *Mary* was led by a secret movement of the Spirit to anoint Christ; as it is certain that, whenever the saints were called to any extraordinary performance, they were led by an unusual movement, so as not to attempt any thing

without the guidance and authority of God. There was no precept in existence enjoining on *Mary* this *anointing*, nor was it necessary that a law should be laid down for every single action; but as the heavenly calling is the only origin and principle of proper conduct, and as God rejects every thing which men undertake at their own suggestion, *Mary* was directed by the inspiration of the Spirit, so that this duty, which she performed to Christ, was founded on assured confidence.

For she hath performed a good action towards me. By this reply, Christ not merely defended the cause of one woman, but likewise maintained the holy boasting of all who rest satisfied with having themselves and their works approved by God. It will often happen that not only censure, but open condemnation, is pronounced on godly men, who are convinced in their own consciences that what they do is agreeable to the command of God; and it is ascribed to pride, if they set at nought the false judgments of the world, and rest satisfied with being approved by God alone. Since this is a hard temptation, and since it is scarcely possible not to be shaken by the agreement of many people against us, even when they are in the wrong, we ought to hold this doctrine, that none will ever be courageous and steady in acting properly, unless they depend solely on the will of God. And therefore Christ settles here the distinction between what is good and evil by his own solitary decision: for by affirming that what the woman has done is *a good action*, when that action had been already condemned by the disciples, he represses by this word the rashness of men, who freely allow themselves to pronounce judgment.

Relying on this testimony, let us learn to set little value on any reports concerning us that are spread abroad in the world, provided we know that what men condemn God approves. In this manner Isaiah, when oppressed by wicked calumnies, makes reference to God as his voucher, (Isa. l. 7,) and Paul likewise appeals to the day of the Lord, (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) Let us therefore learn to pay no deference to the opinions of men farther than that they may be edified by our example in obedience to God, and when the world rises against us with a loud noise, let us satisfy ourselves with

this consolation, that what is reckoned bad on earth is pronounced to be good in heaven.

11. *For you have the poor always with you.* Christ does not simply defend the anointing, so that we may imitate it, but assures us that it pleases God on some particular account. This must be carefully weighed, that we may not fall into the error of contriving expensive modes of worshipping God, as the Papists do; for, hearing it said that Christ was pleased with being anointed by Mary, they supposed that he took delight in incense, wax-tapers, splendid decorations, and pompous exhibitions of that nature. Hence arises the great display which is to be found in their ceremonies; and they do not believe that they will worship God in a proper manner, if they are not immoderate in expense. But Christ plainly makes this exception, that what he wished to be done once would not be agreeable to him in future. For by saying that *the poor* will *always* be in the world, he distinguishes between the ordinary service, which ought to be maintained among believers, and that extraordinary service, which ceased after his ascension to heaven.

Do we wish to lay out our money properly on true sacrifices? Let us bestow it on *the poor*, for Christ says that he is not with us, to be served by outward display. True, indeed, we know and feel by the experience of faith, that he is present with us by power and spiritual grace; but he is not visibly with us, so as to receive from us earthly honours. How utterly mad, therefore, is the obstinacy of those who press upon him foolish expenses which he does not choose, and which he absolutely refuses! Again, when he says that *the poor will always be with us*, we infer from it, that if many are in poverty, this does not arise from accident, but that, by a fixed purpose, God presents to us those on whom our charity may be exercised. In short, this passage teaches us that, though the Lord commands us to dedicate to him ourselves and all our property, yet, with respect to himself, he demands no worship but that which is spiritual, and which is attended by no expense, but rather desires us to bestow on *the poor* what superstition foolishly expends on the worship of God.

12. *She hath done it to bury me.* By these words Christ confirms what we have said, that the *precious ointment* was not valued by him on account of its odour, but solely in reference to his *burial.* It was because he wished to testify by this symbol, that his grave would yield a sweet odour, as it breathed life and salvation through the whole world. Accordingly, we are told by John (xii. 7) that Christ praised Mary *for having reserved that anointing till the day of his burial.* But since the truth of this figure has been made fully apparent, and since Christ, in departing from the sepulchre, perfumed not one house, but the whole world, by the quickening odour of his death, it would be childish to repeat an action for which no reason and no advantage could be assigned.

13. *Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached.* He says that this action will do honour to *Mary*, because it will be praised by the doctrine of the gospel. Hence we infer, that we ought to estimate our works not by the opinion of men, but by the testimony of the word of God. When he says that she will be held in honourable *remembrance throughout the whole world*, by this comparison he indirectly censures his disciples; for among strangers, and in distant parts of the world, all nations, with one consent, will applaud this action, which the members of his own household condemned with such bitterness. Christ gently reproves the disciples also, for not entertaining sufficiently honourable views of his future reign; but at the same time, by this expression he bears testimony to the calling of the Gentiles, on which our salvation is founded. In what sense *the gospel must be preached throughout the whole world*, we have explained[1] under Matthew xxiv. 14.

[1] See p. 128 of this volume.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 14. Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, 15. And said to them, What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you? And they appointed to him thirty pieces of silver. 16. And from that time he sought an opportunity to betray him. 17. Now on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying to him, Where dost thou wish us to prepare for you to eat the passover? 18. And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say to him, The Master saith, My time is near; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. 19. And the disciples did as Jesus commanded them, and prepared the passover.[1] 20. And when the evening was come, he sat down at table with the twelve.	XIV. 10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests, to betray him to them. 11. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised that they would give him money; and he sought how he might betray him at a convenient time. 12. And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover,[1] his disciples say to him, Where dost thou wish us to go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the passover?[1] 13. And he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith to them, Go into the city, and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher full of water: follow him. 14. And wherever he shall enter, say to the master of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the passover[1] with my disciples? 15. And he will show you a large room furnished; there make ready for us. 16. And his disciples went away, and came into the city, and found as he had said to them, and made ready the passover.[1] 17. And when the evening was come, he arrived with the twelve.	XXII. 3. But Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve. 4. And he went away, and talked with the chief priests and magistrates, how he would betray him to them. 5. And they were glad, and agreed that they would give him money. 6. And he promised, and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude. 7. And the day of unleavened bread came, when the passover[1] must be sacrificed. 8. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare for us the passover,[1] that we may eat. 9. And they said to him, Where dost thou wish us to prepare? 10. And he said to them, Lo, when you are going into the city, you will meet a man carrying an earthen pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he shall enter. 11. And you shall say to the master of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the passover[1] with my disciples? 12. And he will show you a large room furnished; there make ready. 13. And they went, and found as he had said to them, and made ready the passover.[1] 14. And when the hour was come, he sat down at table, and the twelve apostles with him.

Matthew XXVI. 14. *Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot.* Christ's admonition was so far from being of any avail for softening the heart of *Judas*, or producing any change in it for the better, that he immediately went away,

[1] "*L'agneau de* pasque;"—"the passover *lamb*," or, as it is more generally expressed, "the paschal *lamb*."

without any concern, to transact an infamous bargain with his enemies. It was amazing and prodigious stupidity, that he considered himself to have found, in the expense of the ointment, a fair excuse for so heinous a crime; and next, that, after having been warned by the words of Christ, he did not perceive what he was doing.[1] The bare mention of the *burying* ought to have softened a heart of iron; for it would have been easy to infer from it, that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of the human race. But we see in this mirror how great is the blindness of wicked desires, and how powerfully they fascinate the mind. *Judas* was inflamed with the desire to steal; long practice had hardened him in wickedness; and now when he meets with no other prey, he does not scruple to betray basely to death the Son of God, the Author of life, and, though restrained by a holy admonition, rushes violently forward.

With good reason, therefore, does Luke expressly say that *Satan entered into him;* not that the Spirit of God formerly directed him, for he would not have been addicted to theft and robbery, if he had not been the slave of Satan. But Luke means, that he was at that time wholly given up to *Satan*, so that, like a desperate man, he violently sought his destruction. For though *Satan* drives us every day to crimes, and reigns in us, when he hurries us into a course of extraordinary wickedness; yet he is said to *enter* into the reprobate, when he takes possession of all their senses, overthrows the fear of God, extinguishes the light of reason, and destroys every feeling of shame. This extremity of vengeance God does not execute on any but those who are already devoted to destruction. Let us therefore learn to repent early, lest our long-continued harshness should confirm the reign of Satan within us; for as soon as we have been abandoned to this tyranny, his rage will have no bounds. It is particularly worthy of notice, that the cause and source of so great blindness in *Judas* was avarice, which makes it evident that it is justly denominated by Paul *the root of all evils*, (1 Tim. vi. 10.) To inquire here whether or not *Satan*

[1] "Que c'estoit qu'il alloit faire;"—"what he was going to do."

entered into Judas bodily is an idle speculation. We ought rather to consider how fearfully monstrous it is, that men formed after the image of God, and appointed to be temples for the Holy Spirit, should not only be turned into filthy stables or sinks, but should become the wretched abodes of Satan.

17. *Now on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus.* It is first inquired, Why does the day which preceded the sacrificing of the lamb receive the name of *the day of unleavened bread?* For the Law did not forbid the use of leaven till the lamb was eaten, (Exod. xii. 18.) But this difficulty may be speedily removed, for the phrase refers to the following day, as is sufficiently evident from Mark and Luke. Since, therefore, the day of killing and eating the passover was at hand, the disciples ask Christ where *he wishes them to eat the passover.*

But hence arises a more difficult question. How did Christ observe that ceremony on the day before the whole nation celebrated the public passover? For John plainly affirms that the day on which Christ was crucified was, among the Jews, *the preparation*, not of the Sabbath, but *of the passover*, (John xix. 14;) and that *they did not enter into the hall of judgment, lest they should be defiled, because next day they were to eat the passover*, (John xviii. 28.) I am aware that there are some who resort to evasions, which do not, however, give them any relief; for no sophistry can set aside the fact that, on the day they crucified Christ, they did not keep the feast, (when it would not have been lawful to have any public execution,) and that they had, at that time, a solemn *preparation*, so that they ate the passover after that Christ had been buried.

It comes now to be inquired, Why did Christ anticipate? For it must not be supposed that, in this ceremony, he took any liberty which was at variance with the prescriptions of the Law. As to the notion entertained by some, that the Jews, through their eagerness to put Christ to death, delayed the passover, it is ably refuted by *Bucer*, and, indeed, falls to the ground by its own absurdity. I have no doubt, there-

fore, that Christ observed the day appointed by the Law, and that the Jews followed a custom which had been long in use. First, it is beyond a doubt that Christ was put to death on the day before the Sabbath; for he was hastily buried before sunset in *a sepulchre which was at hand*, (John xix. 42,) because it was necessary to abstain from work after the commencement of the evening. Now it is universally admitted that, by an ancient custom, when *the passover* and other festivals happened on Friday, they were delayed till the following day, because the people would have reckoned it hard to abstain from work on two successive days. The Jews maintain that this law was laid down immediately after the return of the people from the Babylonish captivity, and that it was done by a revelation from heaven, that they may not be thought to have made any change, of their own accord, in the commandments of God.

Now if it was the custom, at that time, to join two festivals in one, (as the Jews themselves admit, and as their ancient writings prove,) it is a highly probable conjecture that Christ, who celebrated the passover on the day before the Sabbath, observed the day prescribed by the Law; for we know how careful he was not to depart from a single iota of the Law. Having determined to be subject to the Law, that he might deliver us from its yoke, he did not forget this subjection at his latest hour; and therefore he would rather have chosen to omit an outward ceremony, than to transgress the ordinance which God had appointed, and thus lay himself open to the slanders of wicked men. Even the Jews themselves unquestionably will not deny that, whenever the Sabbath immediately followed the passover, it was on one day, instead of both, that they abstained from work, and that this was enjoined by the Rabbins. Hence it follows that Christ, in departing from the ordinary custom, attempted nothing contrary to the Law.

18. *Go into the city to such a man.* Matthew specifies a certain man; the other two Evangelists relate that *the disciples* were sent as to an unknown individual, because a sign was given to them of a man *carrying a pitcher of water*. But

this difference is easily reconciled; for Matthew, passing by the miracle, describes that man who was then unknown to the disciples; for it cannot be doubted that, when they came to the house, they found that it was one of their acquaintances. Christ enjoins him authoritatively to make ready a lodging for himself and his disciples, calling him *master;* and the man immediately complies. But though he might have expressly pointed out the man by name, he chose rather to direct his disciples to him by a miracle, that, when they shortly afterwards saw him reduced to a state of weakness, their faith might remain firm, being supported by this evidence. It was no slight confirmation that, a few hours before he was put to death, he had given an undoubted proof that he was God, that they might know that he was not constrained by necessity, but yielded of his own accord. And though at the very time when the weariness occurred, this was perhaps of no advantage to them, yet the recollection of it was afterwards useful; as even in the present day, in order to rise above the offence of the cross, it is of great importance to us to know that, along with the weakness of the flesh, the glory of divinity appeared in Christ about the very time of his death.

My time is near. Though he celebrated *the passover* correctly according to the injunction of the Law, yet he appears to assign this reason for the express purpose of avoiding the blame of self-will. He says, therefore, that there are reasons why he must make haste, and not comply with a received custom, because he is called to a greater sacrifice. And yet, as we have said, he introduces no change in the ceremony, but repeats once and again, that *the time* of his death *is near*, in order to inform them that he hastens cheerfully to do what the Father had appointed. And as to his connecting the figure of the sacrifice with the reality, in this way he exhorted believers to compare with the ancient figures what he accomplished in reality. This comparison is highly fitted to illustrate the power and efficacy of his death; for *the passover* was enjoined on the Jews, not merely to remind them of an ancient deliverance, but also that they might expect a future and more excellent deliverance from Christ. Such is

the import of what Paul says, that *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*, (1 Cor. v. 7.)

19. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them.* The readiness with which the disciples comply ought to be observed as a proof of their holy submission; for a doubt might naturally arise, when in search of an unknown man, whether they would obtain from *the master of the house* what they asked by their Master's command, while they were aware that everywhere he was not only despised but even hated. Yet they make no anxious inquiry about the result, but peaceably obey the injunction. And if we are desirous to have our faith approved, we ought to abide by this rule, to be satisfied with the command alone, and go forward wherever God commands, and, expecting the success which he promises, not to indulge in excessive anxiety.

20. *When the evening was come, he sat down at table.* Not to eat *the passover*, which they were bound to do standing, as travellers, when they are in haste, are wont to take food hastily, *with shoes on their feet, and a staff in their hand*, (Exod. xii. 11;) but I consider the meaning to be, that after having observed the solemn rite, he *sat down at table* to supper. Accordingly, the Evangelists say, *when the evening was come:* for, at the commencement of the evening, they killed the lamb, and ate the flesh of it roasted.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 21. And while they were eating, he said, Verily I tell you, That one of you will betray me. 22. And they became exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say to him, Lord, is it I? 23. But he answering said, He who hath dipped his	XIV. 18. And while they were sitting at table and eating, Jesus said, Verily I tell you,[1] One of you that eateth with me will betray me. 19. And they began to be sorrowful, and every one of them to say to him, Is it I? And another	XXII. 15. And he said to them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. 16. For I tell you, henceforth I will not eat of it any more, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (*And a little after.*)

[1] This clause has been omitted, through oversight, in Calvin's Latin version; but the defect is supplied—as in other instances—by the French copy, "*Je vous dy en verité;*"—"*I tell you in truth.*"—*Ed.*

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
hand with me in the dish will betray me. 24. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born. 25. And Judas, who betrayed him, answering, said, Rabbi, is it I?[1] He said to him, Thou hast said it.	said, Is it I? 20. And he answering said to them, It is one of the twelve, who dippeth with me in the dish. 21. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.	21. But yet, lo, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me at the table. 22. And the Son of man indeed goeth, according to what hath been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed! 23. And they began to inquire among themselves,[2] which of them it was that would do this.

Matthew XXVI. 21. *One of you will betray me.* To render the treachery of Judas more detestable, he points out the aggravated baseness of it by this circumstance, that he was meditating the act of *betraying* him while he *sat with him at the* holy *table.* For if a stranger had done this, it would have been more easily endured; but that one of his intimate friends should form such a design, and—what is more—that, after having entered into an infamous bargain, he should be present at the sacred banquet, was incredibly monstrous. And therefore Luke employs a connecting particle which marks a contrast: BUT YET, (πλὴν,) *lo, the hand of him that betrayeth me.* And though Luke adds this saying of Christ after the supper was finished, we cannot obtain from it any certainty as to the order of time, which, we know, was often disregarded by the Evangelists. Yet I do not deny that it is probable that Judas was present, when Christ distributed to his disciples the symbols of his flesh and blood.

22. *They began every one of them to say to him.* I do not think that the disciples were alarmed, as persons struck with terror are wont to give themselves uneasiness without any reason; but, abhorring the crime, they are desirous to clear themselves from the suspicion of it. It is, indeed, a mark of reverence, that when indirectly blamed, they do not reply

[1] "Maistre, est-ce moy?"—"Master, is it I?"

[2] "Lors ils commencerent à s'entredemander l'un à l'autre;"—"then they began to ask one another."

angrily to their Master, but each person constitutes himself his own judge, (as the object which we ought chiefly to aim at is, to be acquitted by his own mouth;) but, relying on a good conscience, they wish to declare frankly how far they are from meditating such a crime.

23. *But he answering said.* Christ, by his reply, neither removes their doubt, nor points out the person of Judas, but only confirms what he said a little before, that *one of his friends sitting at the table* is the traitor. And though they thought it hard to be left in suspense and perplexity for a time, that they might employ themselves in contemplating the atrocity of the crime, it was afterwards followed by another advantage, when they perceived that the prediction of the psalm was fulfilled, *He that ate pleasant food with me*[1] *hath lifted up his heel against me*, (Psalm xli. 10.) Besides, in the person of Judas, our Lord intended to admonish his followers in all ages, not to be discouraged or faint on account of intimate friends proving to be traitors; because the same thing that was experienced by Him who is the Head of the whole Church, must happen to us who are members of it.

24. *The Son of man indeed goeth.* Here Christ meets an offence, which might otherwise have greatly shaken pious minds. For what could be more unreasonable than that the Son of God should be infamously betrayed by a disciple, and abandoned to the rage of enemies, in order to be dragged to an ignominious death? But Christ declares that all this takes place only by the will of God; and he proves this decree by the testimony of Scripture, because God formerly revealed, by the mouth of his Prophet, what he had determined.

We now perceive what is intended by the words of Christ. It was, that the disciples, knowing that what was done was regulated by the providence of God, might not imagine that his life or death was determined by chance. But the useful-

[1] "*Celuy qui mangeoit en ami avec moy;*"—"*he that ate with me as a friend.*"

ness of this doctrine extends much farther; for never are we fully confirmed in the result of the death of Christ, till we are convinced that he was not accidentally dragged by men to the cross, but that the sacrifice had been appointed by an eternal decree of God for expiating the sins of the world. For whence do we obtain reconciliation, but because Christ has appeased the Father by his obedience? Wherefore let us always place before our minds the providence of God, which Judas himself, and all wicked men—though it is contrary to their wish, and though they have another end in view—are compelled to obey. Let us always hold this to be a fixed principle, that Christ suffered, because it pleased God to have such an expiation.

And yet Christ does not affirm that Judas was freed from blame, on the ground that he did nothing but what God had appointed. For though God, by his righteous judgment, appointed for the price of our redemption the death of his Son, yet nevertheless, Judas, in betraying Christ, brought upon himself righteous condemnation, because he was full of treachery and avarice. In short, God's determination that the world should be redeemed, does not at all interfere with Judas being a wicked traitor. Hence we perceive, that though men can do nothing but what God has appointed, still this does not free them from condemnation, when they are led by a wicked desire to sin. For though God directs them, by an unseen bridle, to an end which is unknown to them, nothing is farther from their intention than to obey his decrees. Those two principles, no doubt, appear to human reason to be inconsistent with each other, that God regulates the affairs of men by his Providence in such a manner, that nothing is done but by his will and command, and yet he damns the reprobate, by whom he has carried into execution what he intended. But we see how Christ, in this passage, reconciles both, by pronouncing a curse on Judas, though what he contrived against God had been appointed by God; not that Judas's act of betraying ought strictly to be called the work of God, but because God turned the treachery of Judas so as to accomplish His own purpose.

I am aware of the manner in which some commentators endeavour to avoid this rock. They acknowledge that what had been written was accomplished through the agency of Judas, because God testified by predictions what He foreknew. By way of softening the doctrine, which appears to them to be somewhat harsh, they substitute the *foreknowledge* of God in place of the *decree*, as if God merely beheld from a distance future events, and did not arrange them according to his pleasure. But very differently does the Spirit settle this question; for not only does he assign as the reason why Christ was delivered up, that *it was so written*, but also that it was so *determined*. For where Matthew and Mark quote Scripture, Luke leads us direct to the heavenly decree, saying, *according to what was determined;* as also in the Acts of the Apostles, he shows that Christ *was delivered* not only *by the foreknowledge*, but likewise *by the fixed purpose of God*, (Acts ii. 25;) and a little afterwards, that *Herod and Pilate*, with other wicked men, *did those things which had been fore-ordained by the hand and purpose of God*, (Acts iv. 27, 28.) Hence it is evident that it is but an ignorant subterfuge which is employed by those who betake themselves to bare foreknowledge.

It had been good for that man. By this expression we are taught what a dreadful vengeance awaits the wicked, for whom *it would have been better that they had never been born.* And yet this life, though transitory, and full of innumerable distresses, is an invaluable gift of God. Again, we also infer from it, how detestable is their wickedness, which not only extinguishes the precious gifts of God, and turns them to their destruction, but makes it to have been *better for them* that they had never tasted the goodness of God. But this phrase is worthy of observation, *it would have been good for that man if he had never been born;* for though the condition of Judas was wretched, yet to have created him was good in God, who, appointing the reprobate to the day of destruction, illustrates also in this way his own glory, as Solomon tells us: *The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*, (Prov. xvi. 4.) The

secret government of God, which provides even the schemes and works of men, is thus vindicated, as I lately noticed, from all blame and suspicion.

25. *And Judas, who betrayed him.* Though we often see persons trembling, who are conscious of doing wrong, yet along with dread and secret torments there is mingled such stupidity, that they boldly make a flat denial; but in the end they gain nothing by their impudence but to expose their hidden wickedness. Thus *Judas*, while he is restrained by an evil conscience, cannot remain silent; so dreadfully is he tormented, and, at the same time, overwhelmed with fear and anxiety, by that internal executioner. Christ, by indirectly glancing, in his reply, at the foolish rashness of *Judas*, entreats him to consider the crime which he wished to conceal; but his mind, already seized with diabolical rage, could not admit such a sentiment. Let us learn from this example, that the wicked, by bold apologies, do nothing more than draw down upon themselves a more sudden judgment.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 26. And while they were eating, Jesus took bread; and when he had given thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27. And having taken the cup and given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it. 28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29. And I tell you, I will not henceforth drink[1] of the fruit of the vine, till that	XIV. 22. And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had blessed,[2] he broke it, and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24. And he said to them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you. 25. Verily I tell you, henceforth I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till	XXII. 17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18. For I tell you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. 20. In like

[1] "Que de ceste heure je ne boiray de ce fruict de vigne;"—"that from this hour I will not drink of the fruit of the vine."

[2] "Et apres avoir rendu graces;"—"and after having given thanks."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father. 30. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mountain of Olives.	that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mountain of Olives.	manner also the cup,[1] after that he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

As Luke mentions that *the cup* was twice presented by Christ, we must inquire, in the first place, if it be a repetition, (as the Evangelists are wont frequently to say the same thing twice,) or if Christ, after having tasted the cup, repeated the same thing a second time. This latter conjecture appears to me to be probable; for we know that the holy fathers, during sacrifices, observed the solemn rite of tasting the cup;[2] and hence those words of the Psalmist, *I will take the cup of salvation, and will call on the name of the Lord*, (Ps. cxvi. 13.) I have no doubt, therefore, that Christ, according to the ancient custom, tasted *the cup* in the holy feast, which otherwise could not have been correctly observed; and Luke expressly mentions this, before coming to give an account of the new mystery, which was a totally different institution from the paschal lamb. It was in compliance also with received and ordinary custom, that he is expressly said to have *given thanks*, after having *taken the cup*. For at the commencement of the supper, I have no doubt, he prayed, as he was accustomed never to sit down at table without calling on God; but now he wished to discharge once more the same duty, that he might not leave out a ceremony which, I have just now shown, was connected with the sacred act of *taking the cup* and tasting it.[3]

Matthew XXVI. 26. *And while they were eating, Jesus took bread.* I do not understand these words to mean that with

[1] "*Semblablement aussi* leur bailla *la coupe;*"—"*in like manner also* he gave them *the cup.*"

[2] "Que les saincts peres ont observé ceste ceremonie solennelle de prendre la coupe, et gouster un peu de ce qui estoit dedans;"—"that the holy fathers observed this ceremony of taking the cup, and tasting a little of what was within it."

[3] "De prendre la coupe, et en gouster."

the paschal supper was mixed this new and more excellent supper, but rather that an end was then put to the former banquet. This is still more clearly expressed by Luke, when he says that Christ *gave the cup after that he had supped;* for it would have been absurd that one and the same mystery should be broken off by an interval of time. And therefore I have no doubt that, in immediate succession, after having distributed the bread, he added the cup; and what Luke relates particularly respecting the cup, I regard as including also the bread. *While they were eating,* therefore, Christ took bread, to invite them to partake of a new supper.[1] The *thanksgiving* was a sort of preparation and transition to consider the mystery. Thus when the supper was ended, they tasted the sacred *bread* and *wine;* because Christ had previously aroused them from their indifference, that they might be all alive to so lofty a mystery. And, indeed, the nature of the case demands that this clear testimony of the spiritual life should be distinguished from the ancient shadow.

Jesus took bread. It is uncertain if the custom which is now observed among the Jews was at that time in use: for the master of the house breaks off a portion of a common loaf, hides it under the table-cloth, and afterwards distributes a part of it to each member of the family. But as this is a human tradition not founded on any commandment of God, we need not toil with excessive eagerness to investigate its origin; and it is possible that it may have been afterwards contrived, by a trick of Satan, for the purpose of obscuring the mystery of the Lord's Supper. And even if this ceremony was at that time in use among the Jews, Christ followed the ordinary custom in such a manner as to draw away the minds of his followers to another object, by changing the use of the *bread* for a different purpose. This, at least, ought to be considered as beyond all controversy, that Christ, at this time, abolished the figures of the Law, and instituted a new Sacrament.

When he had given thanks. Matthew and Mark employ

[1] "D'un nouveau souper, c'est, à scavoir de la Cene;"—"of a new supper, that is, of the Lord's Supper."

the word εὐλογήσας,[1] (*having blessed;*) but as Luke employs, instead of it, the word εὐχαριστήσας, (*having given thanks,*) there can be no doubt as to the meaning; and as they afterwards use the word *thanksgiving* in reference to *the cup*, they expound with sufficient clearness the former term. So much the more ridiculous is the ignorance of the Papists, who express the *blessing* by the sign of the cross, as if Christ had practised some kind of exorcising. But we must recollect what I lately noticed, that this *thanksgiving* is connected with a spiritual mystery. While it is true that believers are commanded to give thanks to God, because he supports them in this fading life, Christ did not merely refer to ordinary eating, but directed his view to the holy action, in order to thank God for the eternal salvation of the human race. For if the food which descends into the belly ought to persuade and arouse us to praise the fatherly kindness of God, how much more powerfully does it excite, and even inflame, us to this act of piety, when he feeds our souls spiritually?

Take, eat. That I may not be too tedious, I shall only explain briefly what is the nature of our Lord's institution, and what it contains; and, next, what is its end and use, so far as it may be learned from the Evangelists. And, first of all, it strikes us, that Christ instituted a *supper*, which the disciples partake in company with each other. Hence it follows, that it is a diabolical invention, that a man, separating himself from the rest of the company, eats his supper apart. For what two things could be more inconsistent than that the bread should be distributed among them all, and that a single individual should swallow it alone? Although then the Papists boast, that in their masses they have the substance of the Lord's Supper, yet it is evident from the nature of the case, that whenever they celebrate private masses, they are so many trophies erected by the devil for burying the Lord's Supper.

The same words teach us what sort of sacrifice it is that Christ recommends to us in the Supper. He bids his

[1] In the Greek text, CALVIN appears to have followed the ordinary reading, εὐλογήσας, instead of εὐχαριστήσας, for which there appears to be a preponderance of authorities.—*Ed.*

disciples *take;* and therefore it is himself alone that offers. What the Papists contrive, as to Christ's offering himself in the Supper, proceeded from an opposite author. And certainly it is a strange inversion, (ἀναστροφὴ,) when a mortal man, who is commanded to *take* the body of Christ, claims the office of offering it; and thus a priest, who has been appointed by himself, sacrifices to God his own Son. I do not at present inquire with how many acts of sacrilege their pretended offering abounds. It is sufficient for my purpose, that it is so far from approaching to Christ's institution, that it is directly opposed to it.

This is my body. As to the opinion entertained by some, that by those words the bread was *consecrated*, so as to become the symbol of the flesh of Christ, I do not find fault with it, provided that the word *consecrated* be understood aright, and in a proper sense. So then, the *bread*, which had been appointed for the nourishment of the body, is chosen and sanctified by Christ to a different use, so as to begin to be spiritual food. And this is the *conversion*[1] which is spoken of by the ancient doctors[2] of the Church. But we must at the same time hold, that bread is not *consecrated* by whispering and breathing, but by the clear doctrine of faith. And certainly it is a piece of magic and sorcery, when the *consecration* is addressed to the dead element; for *the bread* is made not to itself, but to us, a symbol of the body of Christ. In short, *consecration* is nothing else than a solemn testimony, by which the Lord appoints to us for a spiritual use an earthly and corruptible sign; which cannot take place, unless his command and promise are distinctly heard for the edification of faith; from which again it is evident, that the low whispering and breathing of the Papists are a wicked profanation of the mystery. Now if Christ consecrates the bread, when he declares to us that it is *his body*, we must not suppose that there is any change of the substance, but must only believe that it is applied to a new purpose. And if the world had not been long ago so bewitched by the subtlety of

[1] "La conversion, ou changement;"—"the conversion, or change."
[2] "Les anciens docteurs."

the devil, that, when the monster of transubstantiation had once been introduced, it will not now admit any light of true interpretation on these words, it would be superfluous to spend any more time in investigating their meaning.

Christ declares that *the bread is his body*. These words relate to a sacrament; and it must be acknowledged, that a sacrament consists of a visible sign, with which is connected the thing signified, which is the reality of it. It must be well known, on the other hand, that the name of the thing signified is transferred to the sign; and therefore, no person who is tolerably well acquainted with Scripture will deny that a sacramental mode of expression ought to be taken metonymically.[1] I pass by general figures, which occur frequently in Scripture, and only say this: whenever an outward sign is said to be that which it represents, it is universally agreed to be an instance of metonymy. If *baptism* be called *the laver of regeneration*, (Titus iii. 5;) if *the rock*, from which water flowed to the Fathers in the wilderness, be called *Christ*, (1 Cor. x. 4;) if *a dove* be called *the Holy Spirit*, (John i. 32;) no man will question but the signs receive the name of the things which they represent. How comes it, then, that persons who profess to entertain a veneration for the words of the Lord will not permit us to apply to the Lord's Supper what is common to all the sacraments?

They are delighted with the plain and literal sense. Why then shall not the same rule apply to all the sacraments? Certainly, if they do not admit that *the Rock* was actually *Christ*, the calumny with which they load us is mere affectation. If we explain that *the bread* is called *his body*, because it is the symbol of *his body*, they allege that the whole doctrine of Scripture is overturned. For this principle of language has not been recently forged by us, but has been handed down by Augustine on the authority of the ancients, and embraced by all, that the names of spiritual things are improperly ascribed to signs, and that all the passages of Scripture, in which the sacraments are mentioned, ought to

[1] "Par une figure qui s'appelle metonymie; c'est à dire, transmutation de nom;"—"by a figure which is called metonymy; that is, the putting of one name for another."

be explained in this manner. When we bring forward a principle which has been universally admitted, what purpose does it serve to raise a loud clamour, as if it were something new and strange? But let obstinate people cry out as they please, all men of sound judgment and modesty will admit, that in these words of Christ there is a sacramental form of expression. Hence it follows, that *the bread* is called *his body*, because it is a symbol of the body of Christ.

Now there are two classes of men that rise up against us. The Papists, deceived by their transubstantiation, maintain that what we see is not *bread*, because it is only the appearance that remains without the reality. But their absurd fancy is refuted by Paul, who asserts that *the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ*, (1 Cor. x. 16.) Besides, their notion is at variance with the very nature of a sacrament, which will not possess all that is essential to it, if there be not a true outward symbol. For whence shall we learn that our souls feed on the flesh of Christ, if what is placed before our eyes be not *bread*, but an empty form? Besides, what will they say about the other symbol? For Christ does not say, *This is my blood*, but, THIS CUP *is the new testament in my blood.* According to their view, therefore, not only the *wine*, but also the materials of which *the cup* is composed, must be transubstantiated into *blood.* Again, the words related by Matthew—*I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine*—plainly show that what he delivered to the disciples to drink was *wine;* so that in every way the ignorance of the Papists is fully exposed.

But there are others who reject the figure, and, like madmen, unsay what they had just said. According to them, *bread* is truly and properly *body;* for they disapprove of transubstantiation, as wholly devoid of reason and plausibility. But when the question is put to them, if Christ be *bread* and *wine*, they reply that the *bread* is called *body*, because under it and along with it the *body* is received in the Lord's Supper. But from this reply it may be readily concluded, that the word *body* is improperly applied to the *bread*, which is a sign of it. And since those men have constantly in their mouth, that Christ spoke thus in reference

to a sacramental union, it is strange that they do not consider what they say. For what is the nature of a sacramental union between a thing and its sign? Is it not because the Lord, by the secret power of his Spirit, fulfils what he promises? So then those later instructions about the letter are not less absurd than the Papists.

Hitherto I have pointed out the simple exposition of the words of our Lord. But now I must add, that it is not an empty or unmeaning sign which is held out to us, but those who receive this promise by faith are actually made partakers of his flesh and blood. For in vain would the Lord command his people to eat *bread*, declaring that *it is his body*, if the effect were not truly added to the figure. Nor must it be supposed that we dispute this point, whether it is in reality, or only by signification, that Christ presents himself to be enjoyed by us in the Lord's Supper; for, though we perceive nothing in it but bread, yet he does not disappoint or mock us, when he undertakes to nourish our souls by his flesh. The true eating of the flesh of Christ, therefore, is not only pointed out by the sign, but is likewise exhibited in reality.

But there are three mistakes against which it is here necessary to be on our guard; first, not to confound the spiritual blessing with the sign; secondly, not to seek Christ on earth, or under earthly elements; thirdly, not to imagine any other kind of *eating* than that which draws into us the life of Christ by the secret power of the Spirit, and which we obtain by faith alone. First, as I have said, let us always keep in view the distinction between the sign and the thing signified, if we do not wish to overturn every thing; for otherwise we shall derive no advantage from the sacrament, if it do not, according to the measure of our small capacity, lead us from the contemplation of the earthly element to the heavenly mystery. And therefore, whoever will not distinguish the *body* of Christ from the *bread*, and the *blood* from the *wine*, will never understand what is meant by the Lord's Supper, or for what purpose believers use these symbols.

Secondly, we must attend to the proper method of seeking Christ; that is, our minds must not be fixed on the earth,

but must ascend upwards to the heavenly glory in which he dwells. For the body of Christ did not, by clothing itself with an incorruptible life, lay aside its own nature; and hence it follows that it is finite.[1] But he has now ascended above the heavens, that no gross imagination may keep us occupied with earthly things. And certainly, if this mystery is heavenly, nothing could be more unreasonable than to draw down Christ to the earth, when, on the contrary, he calls us upwards to himself.

The last point which, I said, claimed our attention, is the kind of *eating*. We must not dream that his substance passes, in a natural manner, into our souls; but we eat his flesh, when, by means of it, we receive life. For we must attend to the analogy or resemblance between *bread* and *flesh*, which teaches us, that our souls feed on Christ's own *flesh* in precisely the same manner as *bread* imparts vigour to our bodies. The *flesh* of Christ, therefore, is spiritual nourishment, because it gives life to us. Now it gives life, because the Holy Spirit pours into us the life which dwells in it. And though the act of *eating* the *flesh* of Christ is different from believing on him, yet we ought to know that it is impossible to feed on Christ in any other way than by faith, because the eating itself is a consequence of faith.

29. *But I tell you.* This sentence is put by Matthew and Mark immediately after the Holy Supper, when Christ had given the symbol of his *blood* in the *cup;* from which some infer that Luke relates here the same thing which we shall find him repeating shortly afterwards. But this difficulty is easily obviated, because it is of little importance in itself at what precise moment Christ said this. All that the Evangelists intend to state by it is, that the disciples were warned both of their Master's approaching death, and of the new and heavenly life: for the more nearly the hour of his death approached, there was the greater necessity for them to be confirmed, that they might not altogether fall away. Again,

[1] "Dont s'ensuit qu'il n'est past infini, mais consiste en quelque certain lieu;"—"whence it follows that it is not infinite, but remains in some particular spot."

as he intended to place his death before their eyes in the Holy Supper, as in a mirror, it was not without reason that he again declared that he was now leaving the world. But as this intelligence was full of sadness, a consolation is immediately added, that they have no occasion for shrinking from the thought of his death, which will be followed by a better life. As if he had said: "It is true, indeed, that I am now hastening to my death, but it is in order that I may pass from it to a blessed immortality, not to live alone without you in the kingdom of God, but to have you associated with me in the same life." Thus we see how Christ leads his disciples by the hand to the cross, and thence raises them to the hope of the resurrection. And as it was necessary that they should be directed to the cross of Christ, that by that ladder they might ascend to heaven; so now, since Christ has died and been received into heaven, we ought to be led from the contemplation of the cross to heaven, that death and the restoration of life may be found to agree.

Till that day when I shall drink it new with you. It is plain from these words that he promises to them a glory which they will share with himself. The objection made by some —that meat and drink are not applicable to the kingdom of God—is frivolous; for Christ means nothing more than that his disciples will soon be deprived of his presence, and that he will not henceforth eat with them, until they enjoy together the heavenly life. As he points out their being associated in that life, which needs not the aids of meat and drink, he says that there will then be *a new kind of drinking;* by which term we are taught that he is speaking allegorically. Accordingly, Luke simply says, *until the kingdom of God come.* In short, Christ recommends to us the fruit and effect of the redemption which he procured by his death.

The opinion entertained by some—that these words were fulfilled, when Christ ate with his disciples after his resurrection—is foreign to his meaning; for, since that was an intermediate condition between the course of a mortal life and the end of a heavenly life, *the kingdom of God* had not, at that time, been fully revealed; and therefore Christ said to Mary, *Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my*

Father, (John xx. 17.) Besides, the disciples had not yet entered into the kingdom of God, so as to *drink new wine with Christ*, being partakers of the same glory. And when we read that Christ drank after his resurrection, though he declared that he would not do so until he had assembled his disciples in the kingdom of God, the apparent contradiction is easily removed. For it is not exactly of meat and drink that he speaks, but of the intercourse of the present life. Now we know that Christ did not at that time drink for the purpose of invigorating his body by food, or of holding intercourse with his disciples, but only to prove his resurrection—of which they were still doubtful—and thus to raise their minds on high. Let us therefore rest satisfied with the natural meaning, that our Lord promises to his disciples that, having hitherto lived with them on earth as a mortal man, he will hereafter make them his associates in a blessed and immortal life.

Luke XXII. 19. *Which is given for you.* The other two Evangelists leave out this clause, which, however, is far from being superfluous; for the reason why the flesh of Christ becomes *bread* to us is, that by it salvation was once procured for us. And as the crucified flesh itself is of no advantage but to those who *eat* it by faith, so, on the other hand, the *eating* of it would be unmeaning, and of hardly any value, were it not in reference to the sacrifice which was once offered. Whoever then desires that the flesh of Christ should afford nourishment to him, let him look at it as having been offered on the cross, that it might be the price of our reconciliation with God. But what Matthew and Mark leave out in reference to the symbol of *bread*, they express in reference to the *cup*, saying, that *the blood was to be shed for the remission of sins;* and this observation must be extended to both clauses. So then, in order that we may feed aright on the flesh of Christ, we must contemplate the sacrifice of it, because it was necessary that it should have been once given for our salvation, that it might every day be given to us.

Matthew XXVI. 27. *Drink you all of it.* As it was the

design of Christ to keep our faith wholly fixed on himself, that we may not seek any thing apart from him, he employed two symbols to show that our life is shut up in him. This body needs to be nourished and supported by meat and drink. Christ, in order to show that he alone is able to discharge perfectly all that is necessary for salvation, says that he supplies the place of meat and drink; by which he gives an astonishing display of his condescension, in thus letting himself down to the feeble capacity of our flesh for the purpose of invigorating our faith. So much the more detestable is the insolence and sacrilege of the Pope, who has not scrupled to break asunder this sacred tie. We learn that the Son of God employed two symbols together, to testify the fulness of life which he bestows on his followers. What right had a mortal man to separate those things which God had joined together?

But it would even appear that the express reason why our Lord commanded *all to drink of the cup* was, in order to prevent this sacrilege from entering into the Church. As to the *bread*, we read that he simply said, *Take, eat.* Why does he expressly command them *all to drink*, and why does Mark explicitly say that *they all drank of it*, if it were not to guard believers against this wicked novelty? And yet this severe prohibition has not deterred the Pope from venturing to change and violate a law established by the Lord; for he has withheld all the people from using *the cup.* And to prove that his rage has reason on its side, he alleges that one of the kinds is sufficient, because the *flesh* includes the blood *by concomitancy.*[1] On the same pretext they would be at liberty to set aside the whole of the sacrament, because Christ might equally well make us partakers of himself without any external aid. But those childish cavils yield no support to their impiety; for nothing can be more absurd than that believers should, of their own accord, part with the aids which the Lord has given, or allow themselves to be deprived

[1] "*Per concomitantiam*, comme disent ses supposts; c'est à dire, pource que l'un ne peut estre sans l'autre;"—"*By concomitancy*, as its partisans talk; that is, because the one cannot exist without the other."

of them; and, therefore, nothing can be more intolerable than this wicked mangling of the mystery.

Mark XIV. 24. *This is my blood.* I have already remarked that, when we are told that *the blood is to be shed*—according to the narrative of Matthew—FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, these words direct us to the sacrifice of the death of Christ, without the remembrance of which the Lord's Supper is never observed in a proper manner. And, indeed, it is impossible for believing souls to be satisfied in any other way than by being assured that God is pacified towards them.

Which is shed for many. By the word *many* he means not a part of the world only, but the whole human race; for he contrasts many with *one;* as if he had said, that he will not be the Redeemer of one man only, but will die in order to deliver *many* from the condemnation of the curse. It must at the same time be observed, however, that by the words *for you*—as related by Luke—Christ directly addresses the disciples, and exhorts every believer to apply to his own advantage *the shedding of blood.* Therefore, when we approach to the holy table, let us not only remember in general that the world has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but let every one consider for himself that his own sins have been expiated.[1]

Of the new testament. Luke and Paul (1 Cor. xi. 25) express it differently, *the new testament in my blood,* but the meaning is the same; for it is only by a spiritual drinking of *blood* that this *covenant* is ratified, so as to be firm and stable. Yet it may easily be inferred from it, how foolishly superstitious the Papists and others of the same stamp are in rigidly adhering to the words; for, with all their bluster, they cannot set aside this exposition of the Holy Spirit, that *the cup* is called *blood,* because *it is the new testament* IN BLOOD. But the same argument applies to the *bread;* from which it will follow that it is called *the body;* because it is *the testament* IN

[1] "Que la purgation de ses pechez a esté faite;"—"that satisfaction has been made for his own sins."

THE BODY. They have no right now to contend that we ought to rely on the simple words of Christ, and shut our ears against expositions from without. It is Christ himself that speaks, and surely they will not deny that he is well qualified to interpret his own words. Now Christ openly declares that he called the *bread* HIS BODY, for no other reason than because he has made with us an everlasting covenant, that, the sacrifice having been once offered, we may now be spiritually fed.

There are two things here which deserve our attention; for from the word *testament*, or *covenant*, (διαθήκη,) we infer that a promise is included in the Holy Supper. This refutes the error of those who maintain that faith is not aided, nourished, supported, or increased by the sacraments; for there is always a mutual relation between the *covenant* of God and the faith of men. By the epithet *New* he intended to show that the ancient figures now cease, and give way to a firm and everlasting covenant. There is an indirect contrast, therefore, between this mystery and the shadows of the law; from which it is evident how much better our condition is than that of our fathers, since, in consequence of the sacrifice which was completed on the cross, we possess the truth in perfection.

Mark XIV. 26. *When they had sung a hymn.* Our three Evangelists leave out those divine discourses,[1] which John relates to have been delivered by our Lord, both in the house and on the road. For, as we have elsewhere stated, their object was rather to embrace the history of our Lord's actions than his doctrine. They glance only at the fact, that he went out of his own accord where Judas was to come; and their object is to inform us that he made such an arrangement of his time, as willingly to meet him who betrayed him.

1 "Ces beaux propos pleins de majesté divine;"—"those beautiful discourses, full of divine majesty."

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 31. Then Jesus saith to them, You will all be offended at me this night; for it is written, I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. 32. But after that I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee. 33. And Peter answering said to him, Though all should be offended at thee, yet I will never be offended. 34. Jesus said to him, Verily I tell thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt thrice deny me. 35. Peter saith to him, Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. In like manner also all the disciples spoke.	XIV. 27. And Jesus saith to them, You will all be offended at me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. 28. But after I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29. And Peter saith to him, Though all should be offended, yet I will not. 30. Then Jesus said to him, Verily I tell thee, that to-day, this night, before the cock crow twice, thou wilt thrice deny me. 31. But he spoke still more strongly, Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. In like manner also they all spoke.	XXII. 31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, lo, Satan has asked that he may sift you as wheat. 32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. 33. And he said to him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both to prison and to death. 34. But he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock will not crow to-day, before thou thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Matthew XXVI. 31. *You will all be offended at me.* What Matthew and Mark extend to all the disciples alike is related by Luke as having been spoken to Peter only. But though the statement was equally addressed to all, yet it is probable that Christ spoke to them in the person of one man, who was to be admonished more than all the rest, and who needed extraordinary consolation, that, after having denied Christ, he might not be altogether overwhelmed with despair.

Luke XXII. 31. *Lo, Satan hath desired.* The other two Evangelists relate more briefly and simply, that our Lord foretold to his disciples their fall. But the words of Luke contain more abundant instruction; for Christ does not speak of the future trouble in the way of narrative, but expressly declares, that they will have a contest with *Satan*, and, at the same time, promises to them victory. It is a highly useful admonition, whenever we meet with any thing that gives us offence, to have always before our eyes the snares of *Satan;* as Paul also teaches, that *we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual armies*, (Eph. vi. 12.) The meaning of the

words therefore is: "When, a short time hence, you shall see me oppressed, know that *Satan* employs these arms to fight against you, and that this is a convenient opportunity for destroying your faith." I have said that this is a useful doctrine, because it frequently happens that, from want of consideration, we are overcome by disregarding temptations, which we would regard as formidable, if we reflected that they are *the fiery darts* (Eph. vi. 16) of a vigorous and powerful enemy. And though he now speaks of that singularly fierce attack, by which the disciples, at one time, received dreadful shocks, so that their faith was well nigh extinguished, yet he manifestly conveys a more extensive doctrine, that *Satan* continually goes about, roaring for his prey. As he is impelled by such furious madness to destroy us, nothing is more unreasonable than that we should give ourselves up to drowsiness. Before there is apparent necessity for fighting, let us already prepare ourselves; for we know that *Satan* desires our destruction, and with great skill and assiduity seizes on every method of injuring us. And when we come to the conflict, let us know that all temptations, from whatever quarter they come, were forged in the workshop of that enemy.

That he may sift you as wheat. The metaphor of *sifting* is not in every respect applicable; for we have elsewhere seen[1] that the Gospel is compared to a *winnowing-fan* or *sieve*, by which the *wheat* is purified from the *chaff*, (Matth. iii. 12;) but here it simply means to toss up and down, or to shake with violence, because the apostles were driven about with unusual severity by the death of Christ. This ought to be understood, because there is nothing in which Satan takes less delight than the *purification* of believers. Yet though it be for a different purpose that he shakes them, it is nevertheless true, that they are driven and tossed about in every direction, just as the *wheat* is shaken by the *winnowing-fan*. But we shall shortly afterwards see that a still more disastrous fulfilment of these words was experienced by the disciples. And this is what is meant by the words of our Lord, as related

[1] *Harmony*, vol. i. p. 199.

by Matthew and Mark: *you will all be offended at me.* They mean that the disciples will not only be attacked, but will nearly give way; because the ignominious treatment of Christ will quite overpower their minds. For whereas it was their duty to advance steadily with their Master to the cross, fear kept them back. Their infirmity is thus exhibited to them, that by prayers and groans they may betake themselves to God's holy protection.

Matthew XXVI. 31. *For it is written.* By this prediction he encourages them to rise above the offence, because God does not cease to recognize as his *sheep* those who are driven out and scattered in every direction for a time. After having treated of the restoration of the Church, the prophet, in order to prevent the minds of the godly from being overwhelmed with despair by the extreme distresses which were already at hand, declares, that when the government has been brought into a state of confusion, or even completely overturned, there will be a sad and miserable dispersion, but yet the grace of God will be victorious. And though almost all commentators confine the passage in Zechariah (xiii. 7) to the person of Christ alone, yet I extend it farther, as meaning that a government, on which the salvation of the people depends, will no longer exist, because the *shepherds* will be driven from the midst of them. I have no doubt that the Lord intended to include that whole period during which, after the tyranny of Antiochus, the Church was deprived of good *shepherds*, and reduced to a state of desolation; for at that time God permitted the sword to commit fearful devastation, and, by slaying the *shepherds*, to throw the people into a state of wretched confusion. And yet this *scattering* did not prevent the Lord from gathering his *sheep* at length, by *stretching out his hand* towards them.

But though the prophet utters a general threatening that the Church will be deprived of *shepherds*, still this is justly and properly applied to Christ. For since he was the prince of all the *shepherds*, on whom alone the salvation of the Church depended, when he was dead, it might be thought that all hope was utterly gone. And, indeed, it was an extremity of

temptation, when the Redeemer, who was the breath and life of his people, after having begun to collect the flock of God, was suddenly dragged to death. But so much the more strikingly was the grace of God displayed, when out of dispersion and death the remaining flock was again assembled in a wonderful manner.

Thus we see, that Christ quoted this passage appropriately, that the disciples might not be too much alarmed by the future dispersion, and yet that, aware of their own weakness, they might rely on their *Shepherd*. The meaning therefore is: "Not having yet felt your weakness, you imagine that you are sufficiently vigorous and powerful; but it will soon be apparent that the prediction of Zechariah is true, that, *when the shepherd is slain, the flock will be scattered*. But yet let the promise which is added exhilarate and support you, that God will *stretch out his hand*, to bring back to Him the *scattered sheep*." We are here taught, that there is no unity that brings salvation but that which keeps the *sheep* united under Christ's crook.

32. *But after I have risen*. He now expresses more clearly —what I lately hinted—that the disciples, struck with dread, will resemble for a short time *scattered* and wandering *sheep*, but will at length be brought back to the fold. For Christ does not simply say that *he will rise again*, but promises to be their leader, and takes them for his companions, as if they had never swerved from their allegiance to him; and, to impart to them greater confidence, he mentions the place where they will again meet; as if he had said, "You, who are *scattered* at Jerusalem, will be again assembled by me in *Galilee*."

33. *Peter answering*. Though *Peter* uses no hypocrisy, but speaks with sincere affection, yet as a false confidence in his virtue carries him away into foolish boasting, he is justly reproved by Christ, and shortly afterwards is severely punished for his rashness. Thus the event showed, that *Peter* promised more for himself than he was able to accomplish, because he had not been sufficiently careful to examine

himself. Hence too we see more clearly, how stupid is the intoxication of human presumption, that, when he is again reminded of his weakness by the Son of God, and that with the solemnity of an oath, he is so far from yielding, or even from making any abatement of his foolish confidence, that he goes on to show those lofty pretensions with more fierceness than ever.

But it is asked, Had not *Peter* a right to hope what he promises for himself? and was he not even bound, relying on the promise of Christ, to make this promise for himself? I answer, When Christ formerly promised to his disciples the spirit of unshaken fortitude, he referred to a new state of things which followed the resurrection; and, therefore, as they were not yet endued with heavenly power, *Peter*, forming confident expectations from himself, goes beyond the limits of faith. He erred in two respects. First, by anticipating the time he made a rash engagement, and did not rely on the promise of the Lord. Secondly, shutting his eyes on his own weakness, and under the influence of thoughtlessness rather than of courage, he undertook more than the case warranted.

This claims our attention, that every man, remembering his own weakness, may earnestly resort to the assistance of the Holy Spirit; and next, that no man may venture to take more upon himself than what the Lord promises. Believers ought, indeed, to be prepared for the contest in such a manner that, entertaining no doubt or uncertainty about the result and the victory, they may resist fear; for trembling and excessive anxiety are marks of distrust. But, on the other hand, they ought to guard against that stupidity which shakes off all anxiety, and fills their minds with pride, and extinguishes the desire to pray. This middle course between two faulty extremes[1] is very beautifully expressed by Paul, when he enjoins us to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us to will and perform*, (Philip. ii. 12, 13.) For, on the one hand, having humbled us, he entreats us to seek supplies elsewhere; and, on the other hand, lest anxiety should induce sloth, he

[1] "Entre ces deux extremitez vicieuses."

exhorts us to strenuous exertions. And, therefore, whenever any temptation is presented to us, let us first remember our weakness, that, being entirely thrown down, we may learn to seek elsewhere what we need; and, next, let us remember the grace which is promised, that it may free us from doubt. For those who, forgetting their weakness, and not calling on God, feel assured that they are strong, act entirely like drunken soldiers, who throw themselves rashly into the field, but, as soon as the effects of strong drink are worn off, think of nothing else than flight.

It is wonderful that the other disciples, after *Peter* had been reproved, still break out into the same rashness; and hence it is evident how little they knew themselves. We are taught by this example, that we ought to attempt nothing, except so far as God stretches out his hand; for nothing is more fading or transitory than inconsiderate zeal. The disciples perceive that nothing is more base or unreasonable than to forsake their Master; and, therefore, they justly detest so infamous an action: but, having no reliance on the promise, and neglecting prayer, they advance with inconsiderate haste to boast of a constancy which they did not possess.

Luke.

XXII. 35. And he said to them, When I sent you without purse, or scrip, or shoes, did you want any thing? And they said, Nothing. 36. He therefore said to them, But now let him who hath a purse take it, and, in like manner, a scrip; and let him who hath not a sword sell his garment and buy one. 37. For I tell you, that this also which is written must be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned with the transgressors. For those things which relate to me have an end.[1] 38. And they said, Lord, lo, here are two swords. And he said to them, It is enough.

Luke XXII. 35. *And he said to them.* The whole object of this discourse of Christ is to show, that hitherto he spared his disciples, so as to lay on them no heavier burden than they were able to bear. He reminds them of the indulgence exercised during the past time, that they may now prepare themselves with greater alacrity for severer warfare. For

[1] "Prenent fin, *ou, ont accomplissement;*"—"take end, *or, have their fulfilment.*"

why did he, while they were altogether destitute of skill and training, keep them in the shade and in repose, at a distance from the darts of the enemy, except that, by gradually gathering courage and strength during the interval of leisure, they might be better prepared for fighting? The meaning is: "Hitherto you have had an easy and prosperous condition, because I wished to treat you gently, like children; the full time is now come, when I must employ you in labour, like men." But the comparison which he makes between the two periods is still more extensive; for if they wanted nothing, when they proceeded to discharge their office without taking with them a stock of provisions, when a state of peace allowed them leisure to provide for their necessities, much more now, in the midst of tumult and excitement, ought they to lay aside anxiety about the present life, and run wherever necessity calls them. And although Christ makes special mention of what he had done in reference to the twelve apostles, he shows likewise, that while we are still beginners and weak in faith, he continues to indulge us till we grow up to be men; and, therefore, that they act improperly who devote their leisure to the pursuit of luxuries, which abate the vigour of their faith. And let us not doubt that Christ has regard to us in the present day, since he does not hurry us into the battle while we are still untrained and inexperienced, but, before sending us to the field, supplies us with arms and courage.

36. *But now let him who hath a purse take it.* In metaphorical language he threatens that they will soon meet with great troubles and fierce attacks; just as when a general, intending to lead the soldiers into the field of battle, calls them to arms, and orders them to lay aside every other care, and think of nothing else than fighting, not even to take any thought about procuring food. For he shows them—as is usually done in cases of extreme danger—that every thing must be sold, even to the *scrip* and the *purse*, in order to supply them with arms. And yet he does not call them to an outward conflict, but only, under the comparison of fighting, he warns them of the severe struggles of temptations which

they must undergo, and of the fierce attacks which they must sustain in spiritual contests. That they might more willingly throw themselves on the providence of God, he first reminded them, as I have said, that God took care to supply them with what was necessary, even when they carried with them no supplies of food and raiment. Having experienced so large and seasonable supplies from God, they ought not, for the future, to entertain any doubt that he would provide for every one of their necessities.

37. *That this also which is written must be accomplished in me.* This adverb *also* is emphatic; for Christ means, that he had not *yet* discharged every part of his office, till he had been ranked with ungodly and wicked men, as if he had been one of their class. But that their minds might not be too much disturbed by the baseness of such a transaction, he quotes a prediction of Isaiah, (liii. 12,) which, it is certain, cannot be explained but as referring to the Messiah. Now since it is there said that he was to be *reckoned among transgressors*, such a spectacle, however atrocious, ought not to alarm believers, or to alienate them from Christ, who could not have been their Redeemer in any other way than by taking upon himself the shame and disgrace of a wicked man. For nothing is better adapted to remove grounds of offence, when we are alarmed by any strange occurrence, than to acknowledge that it so pleases God, and that whatever takes place by his appointment is not done rashly, or without a good reason; more especially when that which is made evident by the event itself was anciently predicted. Since, then, the disciples ought to expect a Redeemer such as God had formerly promised, and since Isaiah had expressly declared, that in order that he might deliver us from the guilt of offences the punishment must be *laid on him*, (Isa. liii. 5, 6,) this ought to be sufficient for abating the horror of the disciples, and for preventing them from entertaining less esteem for Christ.

For those things which relate to me have an end. By these words, immediately added, he means that the prophets spoke nothing in vain. For this Greek phrase, τέλος ἔχει, *have an end*, means that they are accomplished, or put in effect.

Now when every thing that the prophets spoke is verified by the event, it ought rather to contribute to strengthen our faith, than to strike us with alarm or anxiety. But while Christ encourages and comforts the disciples by this single argument, that all the predictions *must be accomplished*, the very procedure of the divine purpose contains within itself no ordinary ground of confidence, which is, that Christ was subjected to the condemnation which we deserved, and *was reckoned among transgressors*, that we, who are *transgressors*, and loaded with crimes, might be presented by him to the Father as righteous. For we are reckoned pure and free from sins before God, because the Lamb, who was pure and free from every blemish, was placed in our room, as we shall have occasion to state again under the next chapter.

38. *Lord, lo, here are two swords.* It was truly shameful and stupid ignorance, that the disciples, after having been so often informed about bearing the cross, imagine that they must fight with *swords* of iron. When they say that they have *two swords*, it is uncertain whether they mean that they are well prepared against their enemies, or complain that they are ill provided with arms. It is evident, at least, that they were so stupid as not to think of a spiritual enemy. As to the inference which the Doctors of Canon Law draw from these words—that their mitred bishops have a double jurisdiction—it is not only an offensive allegory, but a detestable mockery, by which they ridicule the word of God. And it was necessary that the slaves of Antichrist should fall into such madness, of openly trampling under feet, by sacrilegious contempt, the sacred oracles of God.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 36. Then Jesus cometh with them to a place which is called Gethsemane, and saith to the disciples, Sit here until I go yonder and pray. 37. And, having taken with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be affected	XIV. 32. And they come to a place which is called Gethsemane; and he saith to his disciples, Sit here until I have prayed. 33. And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John. And he began to be afraid, and to be very	XXII. 39. And he came out, and went (as he was wont) to the mountain of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. 40. And when he came to the place, he said to them, Pray that

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
with grief and sorrow. 38. Then Jesus saith to them, My soul is sorrowful, even to death: remain here, and watch with me. 39. And proceeding a little farther, he fell on his face, praying, and saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; but yet not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40. And he came to the disciples, and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, Couldst not thou watch with me one hour? 41. Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cup cannot pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43. And he came, and found them sleeping again; for their eyes were heavy. 44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed a third time, saying the same words.	sorrowful. 34. And he saith to them, My soul is sorrowful, even to death: remain here and watch. 35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him; 36. And said, Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me: but yet not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith to Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? 38. Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 39. And he went away again, and prayed, saying the same words. 40. And he returned, and found them sleeping again; for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.	you may not enter into temptation. 41. And he withdrew from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42. Saying, Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me; but yet not my will, but thine be done. 43. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44. And, being in agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. 45. And when he had risen from prayer, and come to his disciples, he found them sleeping through sorrow. 46. And he saith to them, Why do you sleep? Arise; and pray, that you may not enter into temptation.

Matthew XXVI. 36. *Then Jesus cometh with them.* Luke mentions *the mountain of Olives* only. Mark and Matthew add a more minute description of the place. But Luke expresses what is still more to the purpose, that Christ came there *according to his custom.* Hence we infer, that he did not seek retirement for the purpose of concealing himself, but, as if he had made an assignation with his enemies, he presented himself to death. On this account John says (xviii. 2) that *the place was known* to the traitor, *because Jesus was wont to come there frequently.* In this passage, therefore, his obedience is again described to us, because he

could not have appeased the Father but by a voluntary death.

Sit here. By leaving the disciples at a distance, he spares their weakness; as if a man, perceiving that he would soon be in extreme danger in battle, were to leave his wife and children in a situation of safety. But though he intended to place them all beyond arrow-shot, yet he took three of them who accompanied him more closely than the rest, and these were the flower and choice, in which there was greater vigour. And yet he did not take them, as if he believed that they would be able to sustain the attack, but that they might afford a proof of the defect which was common to them all.

37. *He began to be affected with grief.* We have seen that our Lord formerly contended with the fear of death; but as he now fights face to face with temptation, such an attack is called the *beginning* of *grief* and *sorrow.* Hence we infer that the true test of virtue is only to be found when the contest begins; for then the weakness of the flesh, which was formerly concealed, shows itself, and the secret feelings are abundantly displayed. Thus, though God had already tried his Son by certain preparatory exercises, he now wounds him more sharply by a nearer prospect of death, and strikes his mind with a terror to which he had not been accustomed. But as it appears to be inconsistent with the divine glory of Christ, that he was seized with trembling and sadness, many commentators have laboured with toil and anxiety to find some way of evading the difficulty. But their labour has been ill-judged and of no use; for if we are ashamed that Christ should experience fear and sorrow, our redemption will perish and be lost.

Ambrose justly says: "I not only do not think that there is any need of excuse, but there is no instance in which I admire more his kindness and his majesty; for he would not have done so much for me, if he had not taken upon him my feelings. He grieved for me, who had no cause of grief for himself; and, laying aside the delights of the eternal Godhead, he experiences the affliction of my weakness. I boldly call

it *sorrow*, because I preach the cross. For he took upon him not the appearance, but the reality, of incarnation. It was therefore necessary that he should experience grief, that he might overcome sorrow, and not shut it out; for the praise of fortitude is not bestowed on those who are rather stupified than pained by wounds." Thus far Ambrose.

Certainly those who imagine that the Son of God was exempt from human passions do not truly and sincerely acknowledge him to be a man. And when it is even said that the divine power of Christ rested and was concealed for a time, that by his sufferings he might discharge all that belonged to the Redeemer, this was so far from being absurd, that in no other way could the mystery of our salvation have been accomplished. For Cyril has properly said: "That the suffering of Christ on the cross was not in every respect voluntary, but that it was voluntary on account of the will of the Father, and on account of our salvation, you may easily learn from his prayer, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* For the same reason that *the Word of God is God*, (John i. 1,) and is naturally *life* itself, (John xi. 25,) nobody doubts that he had no dread of death; but, having been *made flesh*, (John i. 14,) he allows the flesh to feel what belongs to it, and, therefore, being truly a man, he trembles at death, when it is now at the door, and says, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; but since it cannot be otherwise, let it be not as I will, but as thou wilt.* You see how human nature, even in Christ himself, has the sufferings and fears which belong to it, but that the Word, who is united to it, raises it to a fortitude which is worthy of God." He at length concludes: "You perceive that it was not for the sake of the flesh that the death of Christ was voluntary, but that it was voluntary, because, on account of it, according to the will of the Father, salvation and life were bestowed on men." Such are the views of Cyril.

Still the weakness which Christ took upon himself must be distinguished from ours, for there is a great difference. In us there is no affection unaccompanied by sin, because they all exceed due bounds and proper restraint; but when Christ was distressed by grief and fear, he did not rise against

God, but continued to be regulated by the true rule of moderation. We need not wonder that, since he was innocent, and pure from every stain, the affections which flowed from him were pure and stainless; but that nothing proceeds from the corrupt nature of men which is not impure and filthy. Let us, therefore, attend to this distinction, that Christ, amidst fear and sadness, was weak without any taint of sin; but that all our affections are sinful, because they rise to an extravagant height.

The kind of feelings, by which Christ was tempted, is also worthy of notice. Matthew says that *he was affected by grief and sorrow*, (or anxiety;) Luke says that he was *seized with anguish;* and Mark adds that *he trembled.* And whence came his *sorrow*, and *anguish*, and *fear*, but because he felt that death had something in it more sad and more dreadful than the separation of the soul and body? And certainly he underwent death, not merely that he might depart from earth to heaven, but rather that, by taking upon himself the curse to which we were liable, he might deliver us from it. He had no horror at death, therefore, simply as a passage out of the world, but because he had before his eyes the dreadful tribunal of God, and the Judge himself armed with inconceivable vengeance; and because our sins, the load of which was laid upon him, pressed him down with their enormous weight. There is no reason to wonder, therefore, if the dreadful abyss of destruction tormented him grievously with fear and anguish.

38. *My soul is sorrowful.* He communicates to them his *sorrow*, in order to arouse them to sympathy; not that he was unacquainted with their weakness, but in order that they might afterwards be more ashamed of their carelessness. This phrase expresses a deadly wound of grief; as if he had said, that he fainted, or was half-dead, with *sorrow.* Jonah (iv. 9) makes use of a similar phrase in replying to the Lord; *I am angry even to death.* I advert to this, because some of the ancient writers, in handling this passage with a misapplication of ingenuity, philosophize in this way, that *the soul* of Christ was not *sorrowful* IN DEATH, but only *even*

to death. And here again we ought to remember the cause of so great *sorrow;* for *death* in itself would not have so grievously tormented the mind of the Son of God, if he had not felt that he had to deal with the judgment of God.

39. *And he went forward a little.* We have seen in other passages, that in order to excite himself to greater earnestness of prayer, the Lord prayed in the absence of witnesses; for when we are withdrawn from the gaze of men, we succeed better in collecting our senses, so as to attend more closely to what we are doing. It is not, indeed, necessary—nay more, it is not always proper—that we should retire to distant corners whenever we pray; but when some great necessity urges us, because the fervour of prayer is more freely indulged when we are alone, it is useful to us to pray apart. And if the Son of God did not disregard this aid, it would be the greatest madness of pride in us not to apply it for our own advantage. Add to this, that when God alone is witness, as there is nothing then to be feared from ambition, the believing soul unfolds itself with greater familiarity, and with greater simplicity pours its wishes, and groans, and anxieties, and fears, and hopes, and joys, into the bosom of God. God allows his people to make use of many little modes of speaking, when they pray alone, which, in the presence of men, would savour of ostentation.

And fell on his face. By the very gesture of *falling* on the earth, Christ manifested his deep earnestness in prayer. For though *kneeling*, as our expression of respect and reverence, is commonly used in prayer, Christ, by throwing himself on the ground as a suppliant, placed himself in a pitiable attitude on account of the vehemence of his grief.

My Father, if it be possible. In vain do some persons labour to show that what is here described is not a prayer, but only a complaint. For my own part, while I own that it is abrupt, I have no doubt that Christ offered a prayer. Nor is it inconsistent with this, that he asks a thing that is impossible to be granted to him; for the prayers of believers do not always flow on with uninterrupted progress to the end, do not always maintain a uniform measure, are not

always arranged even in a distinct order, but, on the contrary, are involved and confused, and either oppose each other, or stop in the middle of the course; like a vessel tossed by tempests, which, though it advances towards the harbour, cannot always keep a straight and uniform course, as in a calm sea. We must remember, indeed, what I lately mentioned, that Christ had not confused emotions, like those to which we are accustomed, to withdraw his mind from pure moderation; but, so far as the pure and innocent nature of man could admit, he was struck with fear and seized with anguish, so that, amidst the violent shocks of temptation, he vacillated—as it were—from one wish to another. This is the reason why, after having prayed to be freed from death, he immediately restrains himself, and, submitting to the authority of the Father, corrects and recalls that wish which had suddenly escaped him.

But it may be asked, How did he pray that the eternal decree of the Father, of which he was not ignorant, should be revoked? For though he states a condition, *if it be possible*, yet it wears an aspect of absurdity to make the purpose of God changeable. We must hold it to be utterly impossible for God to revoke his decree. According to Mark, too, Christ would seem to contrast the power of God with his decree. *All things*, says he, *are possible to thee.* But it would be improper to extend the power of God so far as to lessen his truth, by making him liable to variety and change. I answer, There would be no absurdity in supposing that Christ, agreeably to the custom of the godly, leaving out of view the divine purpose, committed to the bosom of the Father his desire which troubled him. For believers, in pouring out their prayers, do not always ascend to the contemplation of the secrets of God, or deliberately inquire what is possible to be done, but are sometimes carried away hastily by the earnestness of their wishes. Thus Moses prays that he may be *blotted out of the book of life*, (Exod. xxxii. 33;) thus Paul *wished to be made an anathema*,[1] (Rom. ix. 3.) This, therefore, was not a premeditated

[1] "*A desiré d'estre separé de Christ;*"—"*desired to be separated from Christ.*"

prayer of Christ; but the strength and violence of grief suddenly drew this word from his mouth, to which he immediately added a correction. The same vehemence of desire took away from him the immediate recollection of the heavenly decree, so that he did not at that moment reflect, that it was on this condition[1] that he was sent to be the Redeemer of mankind; as distressing anxiety often brings darkness over our eyes, so that we do not at once remember the whole state of the matter. In short, there is no impropriety, if in prayer we do not always direct our immediate attention to every thing, so as to preserve a distinct order. When Christ says, in the Gospel by Matthew, that *all things are possible to God*, he does not intend by these words to bring the power of God into conflict with unchangeable truth and firmness; but as there was no hope—which is usually the case when affairs are desperate—he throws himself on the power of God. The word (ποτήριον) *cup* or *chalice*—as we have mentioned elsewhere—denotes the providence of God, which assigns to each his measure of the cross and of affliction, just as the master of a house gives an allowance to each servant, and distributes portions among the children.

But yet not as I will, but as thou wilt. We see how Christ restrains his feelings at the very outset, and quickly brings himself into a state of obedience. But here it may first be inquired, How was his will pure from all vice, while it did not agree with the will of God? For if the will of God is the only rule of what is good and right, it follows, that all the feelings which are at variance with it are vicious. I reply: Though it be true rectitude to regulate all our feelings by the good pleasure of God, yet there is a certain kind of indirect disagreement with it which is not faulty, and is not reckoned as sin; if, for example, a person desire to see the Church in a calm and flourishing condition, if he wish that the children of God were delivered from afflictions, that all superstitions were removed out of the world, and that the rage of wicked men were so restrained as to do no injury.

[1] "Avec ceste condition de souffrir la mort;"—"on this condition of suffering death."

These things, being in themselves right, may properly be desired by believers, though it may please God to order a different state of matters: for he chooses that his Son should reign among enemies; that his people should be trained under the cross; and that the triumph of faith and of the Gospel should be rendered more illustrious by the opposing machinations of Satan. We see how those prayers are holy, which appear to be contrary to the will of God; for God does not desire us to be always exact or scrupulous in inquiring what he has appointed, but allows us to ask what is desirable according to the capacity of our senses.

But the question has not yet been fully answered: for since we have just now said that all the feelings of Christ were properly regulated, how does he now correct himself? For he brings his feelings into obedience to God in such a manner as if he had exceeded what was proper. Certainly in the first prayer we do not perceive that calm moderation which I have described; for, as far as lies in his power, he refuses and shrinks from discharging the office of Mediator. I reply: When the dread of death was presented to his mind, and brought along with it such darkness, that he left out of view every thing else, and eagerly presented that prayer, there was no fault in this. Nor is it necessary to enter into any subtle controversy whether or not it was possible for him to forget our salvation. We ought to be satisfied with this single consideration, that at the time when he uttered a prayer to be delivered from death, he was not thinking of other things which would have shut the door against such a wish.

If it be objected, that the first movement, which needed to be restrained before it proceeded farther, was not so well regulated as it ought to have been, I reply: In the present corruption of our nature it is impossible to find ardour of affections accompanied by moderation, such as existed in Christ; but we ought to give such honour to the Son of God, as not to judge of him by what we find in ourselves. For in us all the affections of the flesh, when strongly excited, break out into rebellion, or, at least, have some mixture of pollution; but Christ, amidst the utmost vehemence of grief or fear,

restrained himself within proper bounds. Nay more, as musical sounds, though various and differing from each other, are so far from being discordant, that they produce sweet melody and fine harmony; so in Christ there was a remarkable example of adaptation between the two wills,[1] the will of God and the will of man, so that they differed from each other without any conflict or opposition.

This passage shows plainly enough the gross folly of those ancient heretics, who were called *Monothelites*,[2] because they imagined that the will of Christ was but one and simple; for Christ, as he was God, *willed* nothing different from the Father; and therefore it follows, that his human soul had affections distinct from the secret purpose of God. But if even Christ was under the necessity of holding his will captive, in order to subject it to the government of God, though it was properly regulated, how carefully ought we to repress the violence of our feelings, which are always inconsiderate, and rash, and full of rebellion? And though the Spirit of God governs us, so that we wish nothing but what is agreeable to reason, still we owe to God such obedience as to endure patiently that our wishes should not be granted.[3] For the modesty of faith consists in permitting God to appoint differently from what we desire. Above all, when we have no certain and special promise, we ought to abide by this rule, not to ask any thing but on the condition that God shall fulfil what he has decreed; which cannot be done, unless we give up our wishes to his disposal.

It comes now to be inquired, what advantage did Christ gain by praying? The apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, says that *he was heard* (ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας) *on account of his fear:* for so ought that passage to be explained, and not, as it is usually explained, *on account of his reverence*, (Heb. v. 7.) That would not have been consistent, if Christ had simply

[1] "Les deux volontés."

[2] Μονοθελῆται is compounded of μόνος, *one*, and θέλω, *I will*. The *Monothelite* heresy sprung up in the Seventh Century, and is fully detailed by our ecclesiastical historians. Its leading tenet was, that Christ had not *one will* as God, and *another will* as Man.—*Ed.*

[3] "Que nos souhaits ne vienent point à leur issue, quand ainsi luy plaist;"—"that our wishes should not succeed, when it so pleases Him."

feared death; for he was not delivered from it. Hence it follows, that what led him to pray to be delivered from death was the dread of a greater evil. When he saw the wrath of God exhibited to him, as he stood at the tribunal of God charged with the sins of the whole world, he unavoidably shrunk with horror from the deep abyss of death. And, therefore, though he suffered death, yet since *its pains were loosed*—as Peter tells us, (Acts ii. 24,)—and he was victorious in the conflict, the Apostle justly says, that he was heard *on account of his fear*. Here ignorant people rise up and exclaim, that it would have been unworthy of Christ to be afraid of being swallowed up by death. But I should wish them to answer this question, What kind of *fear* do they suppose it to have been which drew from Christ *drops of blood?* (Luke xxii. 44.) For that mortal sweat could only have proceeded from fearful and unusual horror. If any person, in the present day, were to *sweat blood*, and in such a quantity that the *drops* should *fall to the ground*, it would be reckoned an astonishing miracle; and if this happened to any man through *fear of death*, we would say that he had a cowardly and effeminate mind. Those men, therefore, who deny that Christ prayed that the Father would rescue him from the gulf of death, ascribe to him a cowardice that would be disgraceful even in an ordinary man.

If it be objected, that the *fear* which I am describing arises from unbelief, the answer is easy. When Christ was struck with horror at the divine curse, the feeling of the flesh affected him in such a manner, that faith still remained firm and unshaken. For such was the purity of his nature, that he felt, without being wounded by them, those temptations which pierce us with their stings. And yet those persons, by representing him not to have felt temptations, foolishly imagine that he was victorious without fighting. And, indeed, we have no right to suppose that he used any hypocrisy, when he complained of a mortal sadness in his soul; nor do the Evangelists speak falsely, when they say that he *was exceedingly sorrowful*, and that he *trembled*.

40. *And he came to his disciples.* Though he was neither

delivered from fear, nor freed from anxiety, yet he interrupted the ardour of prayer, and administered this consolation. For believers are not required to be so constant in prayer as never to cease from conversing with God; but on the contrary, following the example of Christ, they continue their prayers till they have proceeded as far as their infirmity allows, then cease for a short time, and immediately after drawing breath return to God. It would have been no slight alleviation of his grief, if his disciples had accompanied him, and taken part in it; and on the other hand, it was a bitter aggravation of his sufferings, that even they forsook him. For though he did not need the assistance of any one, yet as he had voluntarily taken upon him our infirmities, and as it was chiefly in this struggle that he intended to give a proof of that *emptying of himself*, of which Paul speaks, (Philip. ii. 7,) we need not wonder if the indifference of those whom he had selected to be his companions added a heavy and distressing burden to his grief. For his expostulation is not feigned, but, out of the true feeling of his mind, he declares that he is grieved at having been forsaken. And, indeed, he had good grounds for reproaching them with indifference, since, amidst the extremity of his anguish, they *did not watch at least one hour*.

41. *Watch and pray.* As the disciples were unmoved by their Master's danger, their attention is directed to themselves, that a conviction of their own danger may arouse them. Christ therefore threatens that, if they do not *watch and pray*, they may be soon overwhelmed by *temptation*. As if he had said, "Though you take no concern about me, do not fail, at least, to think of yourselves; for your own interests are involved in it, and if you do not take care, *temptation* will immediately swallow you up." For *to enter into temptation* means *to yield to it*.[1] And let us observe, that the manner of resistance which is here enjoined is, not to draw courage from reliance on our own strength and perseverance, but, on the contrary, from a conviction of our weakness, to ask arms and

[1] "Succomber et estre veincu;"—"to yield and to be overcome."

strength from the Lord. Our *watching*, therefore, will be of no avail without *prayer*.

The spirit indeed is willing. That he may not terrify and discourage his disciples, he gently reproves their slothfulness, and adds consolation and good ground of hope. And, first, he reminds them, that though they are earnestly desirous to do what is right, still they must contend with the weakness of the flesh, and, therefore, that prayer is never unnecessary. We see, then, that he gives them the praise of *willingness*, in order that their weakness may not throw them into despair, and yet urges them to *prayer*, because they are not sufficiently endued with the power of the Spirit. Wherefore, this admonition relates properly to believers, who, being regenerated by the Spirit of God, are desirous to do what is right, but still labour under the *weakness* of *the flesh;* for though the grace of *the Spirit* is vigorous in them, they are *weak* according to *the flesh*. And though the disciples alone have their weakness here pointed out to them, yet, since what Christ says of them applies equally to all, we ought to draw from it a general rule, that it is our duty to keep diligent *watch* by *praying;* for we do not yet possess the power of *the Spirit* in such a measure as not to fall frequently through the *weakness* of *the flesh*, unless the Lord grant his assistance to raise up and uphold us. But there is no reason why we should tremble with excessive anxiety; for an undoubted remedy is held out to us, which we will neither have far to seek nor to seek in vain; for Christ promises that all who, being earnest in *prayer*, shall perseveringly oppose the slothfulness of the flesh, will be victorious.

42. *Again he went away a second time.* By these words Christ seems as if, having subdued fear, he came with greater freedom and courage to submit to the will of *the Father;* for he no longer asks to have *the cup removed from him*, but, leaving out this prayer, insists rather on obeying the purpose of God. But according to Mark, this progress is not described; and even when Christ returned *a second time*, we are told that he repeated *the same prayer;* and, indeed, I have no doubt, that at each of the times when he prayed,

fear and horror impelled him to ask that he might be delivered from death.[1] Yet it is probable that, at *the second time*, he laboured more to yield obedience to the Father, and that the first encounter with temptation animated him to approach death with greater confidence. Luke does not expressly relate that he prayed three several times, but only says that, when he was pressed with *anguish*, he prayed with greater copiousness and earnestness, as if he had continued to pray without any intermission. But we know that the Evangelists sometimes leave out circumstances, and only glance rapidly at the substance of what took place. Accordingly, when he says towards the close, that Christ *came to his disciples*, it is a *hysteron proteron*;[2] just as, in another clause, he relates that *an angel from heaven appeared*, before he speaks of Christ's *anguish*. But the inversion of the order carries no absurdity; for, in order to inform us that the *angel* was not sent without a good reason, the necessity for it is afterwards stated; and thus the latter part of the narrative is, in some sort, a reason assigned for the former. Now though it is the Spirit of God alone that imparts fortitude, that does not hinder God from employing *angels* as his ministers. And hence we may conclude what excruciating distresses the Son of God must have endured, since it was necessary that the assistance of God should be granted to him in a visible manner.

43. *And found them sleeping again.* This drowsiness arose neither from excessive eating and drinking, nor from gross stupidity, nor even from effeminate indulgence of the flesh, but rather—as Luke tells us—from immoderate *sorrow*. Hence we perceive more clearly how strong is the tendency of our flesh to indifference; since even dangers lead us to forgetfulness of God. Thus on every hand Satan finds suitable and ready opportunities of spreading his snares for us. For if we dread no danger, he intoxicates and drowns

[1] "A requerir qu'il ne veinst point a ceste mort;"—"to ask that he might not come to that death."

[2] *Hysteron proteron* (ὕστερον πρότερον) is a figure of rhetoric, by which the natural order of events is reversed.—*Ed.*

us in *sleep;* and if we experience fear and sorrow, which ought to arouse us to pray, he overwhelms our senses, so that they do not rise to God; and thus, in every respect, men fall away and forsake God, till he restores them. We must observe also this circumstance, that the disciples, after having been sharply reproved, almost at that very moment fall again asleep. Nor is this said of the whole body, but of the three whom Christ had selected to be his chief companions; and what shall we say of the greater number, when this happened to the flower of them? Now the repetition of the same words was not a *vain repetition,* (*βατταλογία,*) which Christ formerly condemned in hypocrites, (Matth. vi. 7,) who hope that they will obtain by idle talking what they do not ask honestly and sincerely.[1] But Christ intended to show by his example, that we must not be discouraged or grow weary in praying, if we do not immediately obtain our wishes. So then, it is not a superfluous repetition of the words, if a repulse which we have experienced is so far from extinguishing the ardour of prayer, that we ask a third and fourth time what God appears to have denied.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 45. Then he cometh to his disciples, and saith to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: lo, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46. Arise, let us go: lo, he who betrayeth me is approaching. 47. While he was still speaking, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, cometh, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs,[2] from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48. Now he who betrayed him had given them	XIV. 41. And he cometh the third time, and saith to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; lo, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42. Arise, let us go: lo, he who betrayeth me is approaching. 43. And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, who was one of the twelve, cometh, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs,[2] from the chief priests, and scribes, and elders. 44. Now he who betrayed him	XXII. 47. And while he was still speaking, lo, a multitude, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and approached Jesus to kiss him. 48. And Jesus said to him, Judas, be-

[1] *Harmony*, vol. i. p. 313.

[2] Our English versions have generally rendered *ξύλων* by *staves;* but with two exceptions: *swerdis and battis*, (Wiclif, 1580;) *swordes and clubbes*, (Rheims, 1582.) Campbell has adopted the term *clubs.—Ed.*

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, it is he: take him. 49. And immediately approaching, he said to Jesus, Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him. 50. And Jesus said to him, Friend, for what purpose comest thou? Then they approached, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.	had given them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, it is he: take him, and lead him away cautiously. 45. And having come, he immediately approacheth him, and saith, Rabbi, Rabbi,[1] and kissed him. 46. And they laid hands on him, and took him.	trayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

Matthew XXVI. 45. *Sleep on now, and take your rest.* It is plain enough, that Christ now speaks ironically, but we must, at the same time, attend to the object of the irony. For Christ, having gained nothing by warning his disciples, not only gives an indirect reproof of their indifference, but threatens, that how indolent so ever they may choose to be, no longer delay will be allowed them. The meaning therefore is, "Having hitherto wasted my words on you, I shall now come to exhort you; but whatever permission I may give you to *sleep*, the enemies will not allow it to you, but will compel you to watch against your will." In Mark, it is accordingly added, *It is enough;* as if he had said, that there is no more time for *sleeping*. And this is the way in which the Lord usually chastises the indolence of men, that those who wax deaf to words may at length be compelled, by their sufferings, to arouse themselves. Let us, therefore, learn to give immediate attention to the words of the Lord, lest what he wishes to draw from us voluntarily may be too late forced from us by necessity.

46. *Arise, let us go.* By these words he declares that, after having prayed, he was furnished with new arms. He had formerly, indeed, been sufficiently voluntary as to dying; but, when he came to the point, he had a hard struggle with the weakness of the flesh, so that he would willingly have withdrawn from dying, provided that he had been permitted to do so with the good-will of his Father. He, therefore, obtained by *prayers and tears* (Heb. v. 7) new strength from

[1] "Maistre, Maistre;"—"Master, Master."

heaven; not that he ever hesitated through want of strength, but because under the weakness of the flesh, which he had voluntarily undertaken, he wished to labour anxiously, and with painful and difficult exertion, to gain a victory for us in his own person. But now, when the trembling is allayed, and the fear is subdued, that he may again present a voluntary sacrifice to the Father, he not only does not retire or conceal himself, but cheerfully advances to death.

47. *While he was still speaking.* The Evangelists are careful to state that our Lord foresaw what happened; from which it might be inferred, that he was not dragged to death by external violence, except so far as wicked men carried into execution the secret purpose of God. Although, therefore, a melancholy and frightful spectacle was exhibited to the disciples, yet they received, at the same time, grounds of confidence to confirm them, since the event itself showed that nothing occurred by chance; and since Christ's prediction directed them to contemplate the glory of his divinity. The circumstance of *an armed multitude* having been sent by *the chief priests*, and of *a captain and band* having been obtained by request from Pilate, makes it evident, that an evil conscience wounded and tormented them, so that they did every thing in a state of terror. For what need was there for so great a force to take Christ, who, they were aware, was not provided with any defensive arms? The reason for such careful preparation was, that the divine power of Christ, which they had been compelled to feel by numerous proofs, inwardly tormented them; but, on the other hand, it is a display of amazing rage, that, relying on the power of arms, they do not hesitate to rise up against God.

48. *Now he who betrayed him.* I have no doubt that Judas was restrained, either by reverence for our Lord, or by shame for his crime, from venturing openly to avow himself as one of the enemies; and the warning which, Mark tells us, he gave the soldiers—*to lead him away cautiously*, was given, I conjecture, for this reason, that he recollected the numerous proofs by which Christ had formerly attested his divine

power. But it was, at the same time, astonishing madness, either to attempt to conceal himself by frivolous hypocrisy, when he came into the presence of the Son of God, or to oppose the tricks and dexterity of men to his boundless power.

49. *Hail, Rabbi.* I have no doubt that Judas, as if trembling for his Master's danger, pretended by these words to have some feeling of compassion; and, accordingly, in Mark a pathetic repetition is expressed,[1] *Rabbi, Rabbi.* For though he was impressed with the majesty of Christ, still the devil so fascinated his mind, that he felt assured that his treachery was concealed by *a kiss*, and by soothing words. This salutation, or exclamation, therefore, was a pretence of compassion. I offer the same opinion about the *kiss;* for though it was a very common practice among the Jews to welcome friends with *a kiss*, yet as Judas had left Christ but a little before, he seems now—as if he had become suddenly alarmed at his danger—to give the last *kiss* to his Master. Thus he excels the rest in the appearance of affection, when he appears to be deeply grieved at being separated from his Master; but how little he gained by his deception is evident from Christ's reply.

50. *Friend, for what purpose comest thou?* Luke expresses it more fully: *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* except that there is greater force in this reproof, that the benevolence of his Master, and the very high honour conferred on him, are wickedly abused for the purpose of the basest treachery. For Christ does not employ an ironical address when he calls him *friend*, but charges him with ingratitude, that, from being an intimate *friend*, who sat at his table, he had become a traitor, as had been predicted in the psalm: *If a stranger had done this, I could have endured it; but now my private and familiar friend, with whom I took food pleasantly, who accompanied me to the temple of the Lord, hath*

[1] "Il y a une repetition comme d'un homme parlant de grande affection;"—"there is a repetition, as if by a man who spoke from strong feeling."

prepared snares against me.[1] This shows clearly—what I hinted a little ago—that, whatever may be the artifices by which hypocrites conceal themselves, and whatever may be the pretences which they hold out, when they come into the presence of the Lord, their crimes become manifest; and it even becomes the ground of a severer sentence against them, that, having been admitted into the bosom of Christ, they treacherously rise up against him. For the word *friend*, as we have stated, contains within itself a sharp sting.

Let us know that this evil, which Christ once sustained in his own person, is an evil to which the Church will always be exposed—that of cherishing traitors in her bosom; and, therefore, it was said a little before, *The traitor approached, who was one of the twelve*, that we may not be immediately distressed by such instances; for the Lord intends to try our faith in both ways, when, *without*, Satan opposes us and the Church by open enemies, and, *within*, he attempts secret destruction by means of hypocrites. We are taught, at the same time, that we who are his disciples ought to worship God with sincerity; for the apostacies, which we see every day, excite us to fear, and to the cultivation of true godliness, as Paul says, *Let every one that calleth on the name of God depart from iniquity*, (2 Tim. ii. 19.) We are all commanded to *kiss the Son of God*, (Ps. ii. 12;) and we ought, therefore, to see that no one give him a traitor's *kiss*, otherwise it will cost us dear to have been elevated to so great an honour.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 51. And, lo, one of those who were with Jesus, stretching out his hand, drew his sword, and, striking the servant of the high priest, cut off his ear. 52. Then Jesus said to him, Put thy sword again into its place; for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword. 53. Thinkest thou that I cannot now	XIV. 47. But one of those who were present drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 48. And Jesus answering said to them, Are you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me?	XXII. 49. And those who were around him, seeing what would happen, said to him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? 50. And one of them struck a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. 51. And Jesus an-

[1] Our Author, quoting from memory, has blended two passages of a kindred spirit: Psalm xli. 10, and Psalm lv. 12, 13, 14.—*Ed.*

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
pray to my Father, and he will grant to me more than twelve legions of angels? 54. How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? 55. At that hour[1] Jesus said to the multitudes, You are come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me. I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not take me. 56. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.	49. I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But (*this was done*,) that the scriptures might be fulfilled.[2] 50. And they all forsook him, and fled. 51. And a young man followed him, having a linen cloth wrapped about his naked body; and the young men seized him. 52. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.	swering said, Permit it to be thus far; and, having touched his ear, he healed him. 52. And Jesus said to those who had come to him, the chief priests, and rulers of the temple, and elders, Are you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53. When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not lay hands on me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Matthew XXVI. 51. *And, lo, one of those who were with Jesus.* Luke says, that all the disciples made an agreement together to fight for their Master. Hence it is again evident, that we are much more courageous and ready for fighting than for bearing the cross; and, therefore, we ought always to deliberate wisely what the Lord commands, and what he requires from every one of us, lest the fervour of our zeal exceed the bounds of reason and moderation. When the disciples asked Christ, *Shall we strike with the sword?* they did so, not with the intention of obeying his injunction; but by these words they declared that they were prepared and ready to repel the violence of enemies. And, indeed, Peter did not wait till he was commanded or permitted to strike, but inconsiderately proceeded to unlawful violence. It appears, at first view, to be praiseworthy valour in the disciples, that, forgetting their own weakness, though they are unable to make resistance, they do not hesitate to present their bodies before their Master, and to encounter certain death; for they choose rather to perish with the

[1] "A ce mesme instant;"—"at that very instant."

[2] "Mais (*il faut*) que les Escritures soyent accomplis;"—"but the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

Lord than to survive and look on while he is oppressed. But as they improperly attempt more than the calling of God commands or permits, their rashness is justly condemned; and therefore let us learn, that in order that our obedience may be acceptable to the Lord, we must depend on his will, so that no man shall move a finger, except so far as God commands. One reason ought, above all, to lead us to be zealous in cultivating this modesty; which is, that instead of a proper and well-regulated zeal, confused irregularity for the most part reigns in us.

Peter's name is not mentioned here by the Evangelists; but John (xviii. 10) assures us—and from what occurs shortly afterwards in the narrative it is evident—that it was Peter who is here described, though the name is suppressed. Yet Luke enables us easily to infer that there were others also who took part in the same outrage; for Christ does not speak to one person only, but says to all alike, *Permit*[1] *it to be thus far.*

52. *Put thy sword again into its place.* By these words, Christ confirms the precept of the Law, which forbids private individuals to use the sword. And above all, we ought to attend to the threatening of punishment which is immediately added; for men did not, at their own pleasure, appoint this punishment for avenging their own blood; but God himself, by severely prohibiting murder, has declared how dearly he loves mankind. First, then, he does not choose to be defended by force and violence, because God in the Law forbade men to strike. This is a general reason; and he immediately descends to a special reason.

But here a question arises. Is it never lawful to use violence in repelling unjust violence? For though Peter had to deal with wicked and base robbers, still he is condemned for *having drawn his sword.* If, in such a case of moderate defence, an exception was not allowed, Christ appears to tie up the hands of all. Though we have treated this question

[1] Our Author's argument is obviously founded on the circumstance, that the verb ἐᾶτε, *permit*, is in the plural number.—*Ed.*

more copiously[1] under Matthew v. 39, yet I shall now state my opinion again in a few words. First, we must make a distinction between a civil court and the court of conscience;[2] for if any man resist a robber,[3] he will not be liable to public punishment, because the laws arm him against one who is the common enemy of mankind. Thus, in every case when defence is made against unjust violence, the punishment which God enjoins earthly judges to carry into execution ceases. And yet it is not the mere goodness of the cause that acquits the conscience from guilt, unless there be also pure affection. So then, in order that a man may properly and lawfully defend himself, he must first lay aside excessive wrath, and hatred, and desire of revenge, and all irregular sallies of passion, that nothing tempestuous may mingle with the defence. As this is of rare occurrence, or rather, as it scarcely ever happens, Christ properly reminds his people of the general rule, that they should entirely abstain from using *the sword*.

But there are fanatics who have foolishly misapplied this passage, so as to wrest the sword out of the hands of judges. They contend that it is unlawful to strike with *the sword*. This I acknowledge to be true, for no man is at liberty to take *the sword* at his own pleasure, so as to commit murder; but I deny that magistrates—who are God's ministers, and by whom he executes his judgments—ought to be viewed as belonging to the ordinary rank. And not only so, but by these words of Christ, this very power is expressly ascribed to them: for when he declares that murderers must be put to death, it follows, that *the sword* is put into the hands of judges, that they may take vengeance for unjust murders. It will sometimes happen, indeed, that men addicted to the shedding of blood are punished by other means; but this is the ordinary way in which the Lord determined that the fierce cruelty of wicked men should be restrained from riot-

[1] *Harmony*, vol. i. p. 298.

[2] "Entre la jurisdiction externe ou civile, et le jugement spirituel, qui a son siege en la conscience;"—"between external or civil jurisdiction, and the spiritual judgment, which has its seat in the conscience."

[3] "Si quelqu'un use de violence pour repousser un brigand;"—"if any one use violence for repelling a robber."

ing with impunity. Certain doctors of what is called[1] Canon Law have ventured to proceed to such a pitch of impudence as to teach, that *the sword* was not taken from Peter, but he was commanded to keep it sheathed until the time came for drawing it; and hence we perceive how grossly and shamefully those dogs have sported with the word of God.

53. *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father?* Now follows that special reason which I mentioned a little ago; for Christ reminds them, that he would have at his command a better and more legitimate kind of defence, were it not that he must obey the decree of the Father. The substance of what he says is this. "As he has been appointed by the eternal purpose of God to be a sacrifice, and as this has been declared by the predictions of Scripture, he must not fight against it." Thus Peter's rashness is condemned on another ground, that he not only endeavours to overturn a heavenly decree, but also to obstruct the path of the redemption of mankind. Not only did Peter *draw his sword* unlawfully, but the disciples were foolish and mad; for—though they were few in number, and feeble—they attempted to make some resistance to a band of soldiers and a very great multitude. On this account, the Lord, in order to make their folly more manifest, employs this comparison. "If he wished to have a guard to defend his life, he would immediately obtain not eleven *angels*, but a large and invincible army, and since he does not implore that *angels* may be sent to assist him, much less would he resort to ill-considered means, from which no advantage was to be expected; for the utmost that could be effected by the disciples would be of no more service than if a few rooks were to make a noise."

But here some commentators labour to no purpose in inquiring how Christ could have obtained a commission of *angels* from *his Father*, by whose decree it was that he had to suffer death. For the two things are inconsistent: that he exposed his Son to death naked and defenceless, because it was necessary that it should be so, and because it had been appointed; and yet, that he might have been prevailed on

[1] "Qu'on appelle."

by prayer to send him relief. But Christ speaks conditionally, that he has a far better method of defending his life, were it not that the will of *the Father* was opposed to it. This takes away all contradiction, for Christ refrained from presenting such a request to *his Father*, because he knew that it was contrary to his decree. Yet from this we draw a useful doctrine, that those who resort to unlawful means on the plea of necessity pour dishonour on God. If a man is destitute of lawful aid and support, he runs headlong to wicked schemes and sinful undertakings; and the reason is, that few look for the secret protection of God, which alone ought to be sufficient to set our minds at rest. Are we threatened with danger? Because no remedy can be discovered according to the flesh, we make this or the other contrivance, as if there were no *angels* in heaven, who—Scripture frequently tells us—are placed as guardians *for our salvation*, (Heb. i. 14.) In this way we deprive ourselves of their assistance; for all who are impelled, by their restlessness and excessive anxiety, to stretch out their hands to forbidden remedies for evils, do unquestionably renounce the providence of God.

54. *How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?* By this expression Christ means, that he ought not to attempt any method of escaping death, to which he knew that he was called by the Father. For himself, indeed, he had no need of *the Scriptures* to inform him that God had appointed that he should die at that time; but because mortals do not know what God has determined to do until it be revealed by his word, Christ, with a view to his disciples, properly refers to the testimony which God gave of his will. We know that whatever affliction happens to us, it is inflicted by God himself; but since we are uncertain as to the result, when we seek remedies which he allows, we do not rise against his government; but when his will has been ascertained, nothing more remains for us than to acquiesce. Though in this passage Christ teaches nothing more than that he ought patiently to suffer death, because *the Scriptures* have declared that it must be so, yet the use of this doctrine is evidently more extensive, namely, that Scripture is a sufficient bridle for sub-

duing the rebellion of the flesh; because God points out to us what is his will for the very purpose of keeping us in subjection to his will. Accordingly, Paul ascribes to *Scripture* this office, that it trains us *to patience*, (Rom. xv. 4,) and supplies us with all the comfort that we need in adversity. His reproof of the disciples, as given by Luke, is more brief, *Permit them to do thus far;* but still he severely condemns their presumption, in having gone so far as to perform an unlawful action, though at the same time he holds out a hope of pardon, if they suppress their improper zeal, and proceed no farther.

Luke XXII. 51. *And having touched his ear, he healed him.* By his foolish zeal Peter had brought grievous reproach on his Master and his doctrine; and there can be no doubt, that this was a contrivance by which Satan attempted to involve the Gospel in eternal disgrace, as if Christ had kept company with assassins and seditious persons for revolutionary purposes. This, I think, was the reason why Christ healed the wound which Peter had inflicted. But a fearful and amazing stupidity must have seized his adversaries, who were not at all affected by having seen such a miracle. And yet there is the less reason to wonder that they did not see the power of Christ displayed in the person of another, when, after having themselves been laid prostrate by his voice, they still continued to rage, (John xviii. 6.) Such is the spirit of giddiness by which Satan maddens the reprobate, when the Lord has given them over to blindness. Above all, in the person himself who was healed, there is a striking instance of ingratitude; for neither did the divine power of Christ subdue him to repentance for his hardness, nor was he overcome by kindness so as to be changed from an enemy into a disciple. For it is a foolish imagination of the monks that he was also *healed* in his soul, that the work of Christ might not be left incomplete; as if the goodness of God were not every day poured out on those who are unworthy.

Matthew XXVI. 55. *Are you come out, as against a robber?* By these words Christ expostulates with his enemies for having intended to bring odium upon him, by coming

provided with a great body of soldiers; for the meaning is this, "What necessity was there for making such a display of arms against me, as if your object had been to overcome some robber? But I have always lived peaceably amongst you, and without using arms; and when I was teaching in the temple, you might easily have seized me without any military force." Yet, while he complains of their malice in violently rushing upon him, as if he were a seditious man, he again wounds their evil conscience by reminding them, that though they had a traitor for their leader, they approached him with trembling, and with many marks of distrust.

56. *Now all this was done.* The other two Evangelists express it somewhat differently; for what Matthew relates in his own person, Mark appears to attribute to Christ. Luke employs even different words: *this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* But the design of the Holy Spirit is, beyond all doubt, that whatever may be the contrivances of wicked men, nothing whatever has been done but by the will and providence of God; for, as he had said a little before,[1] God has testified nothing by the prophets but what he had determined with himself, (Luke xxii. 37.) First, therefore, we are here informed, that whatever may be the unbridled rage by which Satan and all ungodly men are actuated, still the hand of God always prevails, so as to draw them reluctantly wherever he pleases. Secondly, we are informed, that though wicked men *fulfil* what was predicted in *the Scriptures*, yet, since God does not employ them as his lawful ministers, but directs them, by a secret movement, to that which was farthest from their wish, they are not excusable; and that, while God makes a righteous use of their malice, blame still attaches to them. At the same time, let us observe that Christ said this in order to remove the offence, which would otherwise have greatly disturbed weak minds, when they saw him so reproached and outraged.

Still Christ intended not only to promote the advantage of his disciples, but also to repress the pride of his adversaries,

[1] See p. 223 of this volume.

that they might not triumph as if they had achieved a victory. For this reason, in Luke's narrative he says, *this is your hour;* by which he means that the Lord grants them this liberty for a short time. *The power of darkness* denotes *the power* of the devil, and this term had also a strong tendency to abase their glory; for though they exalt themselves ever so much, Christ shows that they are still nothing more than the slaves of the devil. While all things are mingled in confusion, and while the devil, by spreading darkness abroad, appears to overturn the whole order of the world, let us know that the providence of God shines above in heaven, to bring at length to order what is confused; and let us, therefore, learn to raise the eyes of faith to that calm sky. *Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.* Hence we may again infer how much more ready they were to fight rashly than to follow their Master.

Mark XIV. 51. *And a young man.* How some persons have come to dream that this was John[1] I know not, nor is it of much importance to inquire. The chief point is, to ascertain for what purpose Mark has related this transaction. I think that his object was, to inform us that those wicked men—as usually happens in riotous assemblies—stormed and raved without shame or modesty; which appeared from their seizing *a young man* who was unknown to them, and not suspected of any crime, so that he had difficulty in escaping out of their hands *naked.* For it is probable that *the young man,* who is mentioned, had some attachment to Christ, and, on hearing the tumult by night, without stopping to put on his clothes, and covered only with a linen garment, came either to discover their traps, or, at least, that he might not be wanting in a duty of friendship.[2] We certainly perceive—as I just now said—that those wicked men raged with cruel violence, when they did not even spare a poor *young man,*

[1] "Aucuns ont songé que c'estoit Jean, l'un des Apostres;"—"some have dreamed that it was John, one of the Apostles."

[2] "Ou, pour le moins à fin de faire devoir d'ami envers Jesus Christ;"—"or, at least, in order to perform the duty of a friend towards Jesus Christ."

who had left his bed, almost *naked*, and run, on hearing the noise.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 57. But they who had apprehended Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled. 58. And Peter followed him at a distance, as far as to the court of the high priest, and having gone in, he sat with the servants to see the end. 59. And the chief priests and elders, and the whole council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death, 60. And found none; even though many false witnesses came, they found none: but at length came two false witnesses, 61. Who said, This man said, I can destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days.	XIV. 53. And they led Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, and elders, and scribes, assembled with him. 54. And Peter followed him at a distance, as far as to the palace of the high priest; and he sat along with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. 55. And the chief priests, and the whole council, sought evidence against Jesus, to put him to death, and found none. 56. For many bore false witness against him, but their declarations did not agree. 57. Then some arose, and bore false witness against him, saying, 58. We have heard him say, I will destroy this temple, which was made with hands, and within three days I will build another, made without hands. 59. But even here their testimony did not agree.	XXII. 54. And, having seized him, they led and brought him to the house of the high priest; and Peter followed at a distance.

Luke follows a different order from Matthew and Mark in the narrative; but when we come to the proper place, we will endeavour to reconcile the points in which they differ. It will be proper, in the meantime, to glance briefly at those things which claim our attention in the words of Matthew and Mark. First, in order to remove the offence of the cross, we ought to consider the advantage which we have derived from Christ's *emptying of himself*, (Philip. ii. 7;) for thus will the inestimable goodness of God, and the efficacy of his grace, be found to remove by its brightness every thing in it that was disagreeable or shameful. According to the flesh, it was disgraceful that the Son of God should be seized, bound, and made a prisoner; but when we reflect that by his chains we are loosed from the tyranny of the devil, and from the condemnation in which we were involved before God, not only is the stumbling-block, on which our faith

might have struck, removed out of the way, but in place of it there comes an admiration of the boundless grace of God, who set so high a value on our deliverance, as to give up his only-begotten Son to be bound by wicked men. This will also be a pledge of the astonishing love of Christ towards us, that he spared not himself, but willingly submitted to wear fetters on his flesh, that our souls might be freed from fetters of a far worse description.

Matthew XXVI. 57. *But they who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas.* Though the Jews had been deprived of what is called *the higher jurisdiction*, there still lingered among them some vestiges of that judicial authority which the Law confers on the high priest, (Deut. xvii. 8;) so that, while they had lost the absolute authority,[1] they retained the power of administering moderate correction. This is the reason why Christ is brought before *the high priest* to be interrogated; not that a final sentence may be pronounced on him by that tribunal, but that the priests may afterwards present him before the governor, under the aggravating influence of their decision.[2] *Caiaphas the high priest* was also named *Joseph*, and this man—as we are told by the historian Josephus—was appointed to be *high priest* by Valerius Gratus, governor of Judea, when Simon, the son of Camithus, was deposed from that office.[3] The Evangelists give his surname only,[4] perhaps because he was more generally named, and better known, by it.

Matthew says that the priests *assembled in the house of Caiaphas;* not that they were already assembled at midnight, before Christ was brought, but because the place of meeting

[1] "La puissance de condamner à mort;"—"the power of condemning to death."

[2] "Estant desja chargé par leur jugement, et que cela soit un prejudice contre luy;"—"being already accused by their decision, and that this may excite a prejudice against him."

[3] Ant. XVIII. ii. 2.—Repeated allusions have been made, in earlier portions of the Commentary, to this remarkable passage in the writings of the great Jewish historian. The reader will find it quoted at length.—*Harmony*, vol. i. p. 177, n. 1.—*Ed.*

[4] That is, instead of calling him *Joseph Caiaphas*, they call him simply *Caiaphas.—Ed.*

had been appointed, that, as soon as the information reached them, they might meet hastily at an early hour in the morning; though we have lately seen that some who belonged to the order of the priesthood went out by night, along with the soldiers, to seize Christ. But we have frequently seen, in other passages, that the Evangelists were not very exact in adhering to the order of time. In this passage, certainly, they had no other object in view than to show that the Son of God was oppressed by a wicked conspiracy of the whole council. And here a frightful and hideous spectacle[1] is placed before our eyes; for nowhere else than at Jerusalem was there at that time either a temple of God, or lawful worship, or the face of a Church. *The high priest* was a figure of the only Mediator between God and men; those who sat along with him in the council represented the whole Church of God; and yet all of them unite in conspiring to extinguish the only hope of salvation. But as it had been declared by a prediction of David, that *the stone which the builders rejected would nevertheless become the head-stone of the corner*, (Ps. cxviii. 22;) and as Isaiah had foretold that *the God of armies would be to the whole people of Israel a stone of stumbling, on which they would dash themselves*, (Isa. viii. 14,) the Lord wisely made provision that such wickedness of men should not perplex believing souls.

59. *Sought false witness.* By these words the Evangelists remark, that nothing was farther from the design of the priests than to inquire into the cause, so that, when the matter was thoroughly understood, they might decide what was proper. For they had previously resolved to put Christ to death, and now they only seek a pretence for oppressing him. Now it is impossible that equity can have any place where an examination of the cause is not the first step. In seeking false witnesses, their treacherous cruelty is manifested; and when, after being disappointed of their expectation, they still do not desist, this affords a still more striking display of their blinded obstinacy. Thus, amidst the darkness of their rage, the in-

[1] "Voire qui nous doit faire dresser les cheveux en la teste;"—"one that ought to make the hair stand on our head."

nocence of the Son of God shone so brightly, that the devils themselves might know that he died innocent.

It ought to be observed, also, that the appellation of *false witnesses* is applied not to those who contrive a lie which had no foundation, but to those who calumniously pervert what was justly said, and turn it into a crime; an instance of which is here expressly related as to *the destruction and rebuilding of the temple.* Christ had indeed said, that when *the temple of his body was destroyed, he would raise it up within three days*, (John ii. 19.) The *false witnesses* do not now resort to some new contrivance, but they put a wrong interpretation on his words, as if he boasted that he would practise some juggling in *building the temple.* Now as the calumny was trivial and worthless, we may readily infer from it how greatly the priests and scribes were blinded by their fury, since, without any pretext, they demand that Christ shall be put to death.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVI. 62. And the high priest, rising up, said to him,[1] Answerest thou nothing? What is it that those men testify against thee? 63. And Jesus was silent. And the high priest answering said to him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou art the Christ, the Son of God. 64. Jesus saith to him, Thou hast said it; but yet I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 65. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of wit-	XIV. 60. And the high priest, rising up in the midst, interrogated Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it that those men testify against thee? 61. But he was silent, and answered nothing. Again the high priest interrogated, and said to him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?[2] 62. And Jesus said, I am; and you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63. And the high priest rent his garments, and said, What further	XXII. 63. And the men who held Jesus mocked him, and struck him; 64. And, having blindfolded him, struck him on the face. And they interrogated him, saying, Prophesy, Who is it that struck thee? 65. And many other abusive things they spoke against him. 66. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and chief priests, and scribes, assembled, and led him into their council, 67. Saying, Art thou the Christ? Tell us. And he said to them, If I tell you, you will not believe. 68. And if I also put a question,

[1] "Adonc le souverain sacrificateur se leva, et luy dit;"—"then the high priest rose, and said to him."

[2] "*Le Fils de* Dieu *Benit*;"—"*the Son of the Blessed* God."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
nesses? lo, now you have heard his blasphemy. 66. What think you? And they answering said, He is worthy of death. 67. Then they spat in his face, and gave him blows;[1] and others struck him on the face with the palms of their hands, 68. Saying, Prophesy to us, Christ, Who was it that smote thee?	need have we of witnesses? 64. You have heard the blasphemy: what think you? And they all condemned him to be worthy of death. 65. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face with a veil, and to give him blows, and to say to him, Divine.[2] And the servants gave him blows.	you will not answer me, nor let me go. 69. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit at the right hand of the power of God. 70. And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? He said,[3] You say that I am. 71. And they said, What further testimony do we need? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth.

Matthew XXVI. 62. *And the high priest, rising up.* It is certain that Christ was *silent* when *false witnesses* pressed hard upon him, not only because they did not deserve a reply, but because he did not seek to be now acquitted, knowing that his hour was come. But Caiaphas triumphs over him on account of his silence, as if he was struck dumb by being vanquished; which is usually the case with men who are conscious of having done wrong. But it is an instance of extreme wickedness that he insinuates that Christ is not free from blame, because *witnesses* speak against him. The question, *What is it that those men testify against thee?* amounts to this: "How comes it that those men oppose thee, but because they are urged by conscientious views? For they would not have appeared against thee without a good reason." As if he did not know that those *witnesses* had been procured by fraud: but this is the way in which wicked men, when they find themselves in the possession of authority and power, throw off shame, and indulge in arrogance. Christ was again silent, not only because the objection was frivolous, but because, having been appointed to be a sacrifice, he had thrown aside all anxiety about defending himself.

63. *I adjure thee by the living God. The high priest* thought that this alone was a crime sufficient to condemn Christ, if

[1] "Et le buffeterent;"—"and buffeted him."
[2] "Propheteze-nous;"—"prophesy to us."
[3] "Il leur dit;"—"he said to them."

he professed that he was *the Christ.* But since they all boasted of expecting redemption from Christ, he ought first to have inquired if such was the fact. That there would be a *Christ,* by whose hands the people were to be delivered, they would not have ventured to deny. Jesus came publicly forward, bearing the title of *the Christ.* Why do they not consider the fact itself? Why do they not examine the signs, by means of which a correct decision might have been formed? But, having already determined to put Christ to death, they are satisfied with this pretence of sacrilege, that he claimed for himself the glory of Divinity. And yet Caiaphas examines the matter on oath, as if he had been prepared to yield as soon as it was fully ascertained; but all the while his whole mind is filled with a malicious hatred and contempt of Christ, and is so blinded by pride and ambition, that he takes for granted, that as soon as the fact has been ascertained, without inquiring whether it is right or wrong, he will have just grounds for condemning him.

If thou art the Christ, the Son of God. From the words of Caiaphas we may infer, that it was at that time common among the Jews to bestow on the Messiah the title of *the Son of God;* for this form of interrogation could not have originated in any other way than from the ordinary custom; and, indeed, they had learned from the predictions of Scripture that he was not less *the Son of God* than *the Son of David.* It appears, too, that Caiaphas employed this epithet, with the view either of terrifying Christ, or of exciting a prejudice against him; as if he had said: "See where you are going; for you cannot call yourself *the Christ,* without claiming, at the same time, the appellation of *Son of God,* with which Scripture honours him." Such is also his reason for using the word *Blessed,* which Mark gives instead of *God;* for this pretended reverence[1] for God was intended to bring a heavier charge against Christ than that of profaning the holy name of God.

[1] "Ce mot duquel Caiaphe use, faisant semblant d'avoir une grande reverence à la majesté Divine;"—"this word which Caiaphas employs, pretending to have a great veneration for the Divine majesty."

64. *Thou hast said it.* Luke inserts another reply, by which Christ reproves the malice of the priests, in not inquiring with a desire to know. *If I tell you*, says he, *you will not believe:* by which words he means, that though he were to prove to them a hundred times that he was *the Christ*, it would be of no avail with obstinate men. For they had not only heard, but had beheld with their eyes miracles, which, though Christ had been silent, would have confirmed his heavenly and divine power, and would even have cried aloud, that he was the promised Redeemer.

He next adds a confession, which, though it is related in many words by Matthew, does not convey a different meaning. Jesus affirms that he is *the Christ*, not for the purpose of avoiding death, but rather of inflaming the rage of his enemies against him. Though at that time he was exposed to contempt, and almost annihilated, by his mean garb, he announces, that at the proper time he will at length come with royal majesty, that they may tremble before the Judge, whom they now refuse to acknowledge as the Author of salvation. The meaning therefore is, that they are widely mistaken, if from his present appearance they form a judgment of what he is; because it is necessary that he should be humbled, and almost reduced to nothing, before he appear adorned with the emblems of his royal power, and with magnificent splendour. For by this word *hereafter* he distinguishes between his first and second coming.

We may draw from this a useful doctrine, which is still more extensive. For how comes it that wicked men are so much at their ease? How comes it that they are so insolent in rebellion, but because they do not set a high value on the crucified Jesus? It is therefore necessary to remind them of a dreadful judgment, which, with all their stupidity, they will not be able to avoid. And though they ridicule as a fable what is said about the future coming of Christ, still it is not in vain that the Judge summons them to his tribunal, and orders them to be summoned by the preaching of the Gospel, that they may be rendered the more inexcusable. But this announcement is fitted to be of very great use even to believers, that they may now with the eyes of hope look

for Christ *sitting at the right hand of the Father*, and patiently wait till he comes, and may likewise believe that the rage of wicked men against him, while absent, will not be without its consequences; for they will be compelled to behold him on high *coming from heaven*, whom now they not only despise, but even trample upon in their pride.

Sitting at the right hand of power. The metaphor contained in the term *right hand* must be well known, for it frequently occurs in Scripture. Christ then sits *at the right hand* of the Father, because he is his deputy; and it is called *the right hand* OF POWER, because it is only through the agency of his Son that God now displays his *power*, and will execute judgment at the last day.

65. *Then the high priest rent his garments.* By this we see how little advantage was derived by wicked men from the miracles by which Christ had proved his Divinity. But we need not wonder, that under the mean garb of a servant, the Son of God was despised by those who were unmoved by any anxiety about the promised salvation. For if they had not entirely laid aside every pious feeling, their deplorable condition ought to have led them to look anxiously for the Redeemer; but when they now, without making any inquiry, reject him when offered to them, do they not, as far as lies in their power, destroy all the promises of God? *The high priest* first pronounces Christ to be a blasphemer, to which the others afterwards assent. The *rending of the clothes* plainly shows how boldly and wickedly those who profanely despise God make false pretensions of zeal. It would indeed have been praiseworthy in *the high priest*, if he heard the name of God shamefully profaned, not only to feel inward resentment and excruciating pain, but to make an open display of his detestation; but while he refused to make inquiry, he contrived an unfounded charge of *blasphemy*. And yet, this treacherous hypocrite, while he assumed a character which did not belong to him, taught the servants of God with what severity of displeasure they ought to regard blasphemies, and condemned by his example the shameful cowardice of those who are no more affected by an outrage on

religion, than if they heard buffoons uttering their silly jokes.

Then they spat in his face. Either Luke has inverted the order of the narrative, or our Lord twice endured this highly contemptuous treatment. The latter supposition appears to me to be probable. And yet, I have no doubt that the servants were emboldened to *spit* on Christ, and to *strike* him with greater insolence, after they had seen that the council, so far as their decision had influence, condemned him to death. The object of all these expressions of contempt was, to show that nothing was more unlikely than that he should be a prince of prophets, who, in consequence of being blindfolded,[1] was not able even to ward off *blows*. But this insolence was turned by the providence of God to a very different purpose; for the face of Christ, dishonoured by *spitting* and *blows*, has restored to us that image which had been disfigured, and almost effaced, by sin.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVI. 69. Now Peter was sitting without in the court. And a maid came to him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. 70. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. 71. And as he was going out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said to those who were there, This man also was with Jesus the Nazarene. 72. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73. After a little came those who were standing by, and said to Peter,	XIV. 66. And while Peter was below in the court, one of the maids of the high priest came; 67. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, Thou also wast with Jesus the Nazarene. 68. But he denied, saying, I know him not,[2] nor do I understand what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew. 69. And the maid, when she saw him again, began to say to those that stood by, This is one of them. 70. But he denied it again. And a little after, those that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou	XXII. 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and had sat down together, Peter also sat down amongst them. 56. And when a certain maid saw him sitting near the fire, she fixed her eyes upon him, and said, This man also was with him. 57. But he denied him, saying, Woman, I do not know him. 58. And after a little while, another person, seeing him, said, Thou also wast one of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not. 59. And after the lapse of about an hour, another affirmed, saying, Undoubtedly this

[1] "Lequel ayant seulement un voile devant les yeux;"—"who having only a veil before his eyes."

[2] "Je ne le cognoy point."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
Surely thou also art one of them; for thou art convicted by thy speech. 74. Then he began to curse and to swear, that he did not know the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, who had told him, Before the cock crow, thou wilt thrice deny me. And he went out, and wept bitterly.	art one of them; for thou art also a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth with it. 71. But he began to curse and to swear, (saying,) I know not that man of whom you speak. 72. And the second time the cock crew; and Peter remembered the word which Jesus had spoken to him, Before the cock crow twice, thou wilt thrice deny me; and he began to weep.[1]	man was also with him; for he is a Galilean. 60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crew. 61. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said to him, Before the cock crow, thou wilt thrice deny me. 62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter's fall, which is here related, is a bright mirror of our weakness. In his repentance, also, a striking instance of the goodness and mercy of God is held out to us. This narrative, therefore, which relates to a single individual, contains a doctrine which may be applied to the whole Church, and which indeed is highly useful, both to instruct those who are standing to cherish anxiety and fear, and to comfort those who have fallen, by holding out to them the hope of pardon. And first it ought to be observed, that Peter acted inconsiderately, when he entered into the hall of the high priest. It was his duty, no doubt, to follow his Master; but having been warned that he would revolt, he ought rather to have concealed himself in some corner, so as not to expose himself to an occasion of sinning. Thus it frequently happens that believers, under an appearance of virtue, throw themselves within the reach of temptation.

It is therefore our duty to pray to the Lord to restrain and keep us by his Spirit, lest, going beyond our measure, we be immediately punished. We ought also to pray, whenever we commence any undertaking, that he may not permit us to fail in the midst of our efforts, or at the beginning of the work, but may supply us with strength from heaven till the end. Conviction of our weakness ought not, indeed, to be a reason for indolence, to prevent us from going wherever God

[1] "Et s'estant jetté hors, pleura;"—"and he ran out and wept."

calls us; but it ought to restrain our rashness, that we may not attempt any thing beyond our calling; and it ought also to stimulate us to prayer, that God, who has given us grace to begin well, may also continue to give us grace to persevere.

Matthew XXVI. 69. *A maid came to him.* Here we see that there is no necessity for a severe contest, or for many forces or implements of war, to overpower a man; for any man, who is not supported by the hand of God, will instantly fall by a slight gale or the rustling of a falling leaf. Peter undoubtedly was not less courageous than any of us, and he had already given no ordinary proof of his valour, though it was exercised in a rash and improper manner; and yet he does not wait until he is dragged before the tribunal of the high priest, or until his enemies attempt to put him to death by violence, but, terrified by a woman's voice, immediately denies his Master. And yet but lately he thought himself a valiant soldier even to death. Let us therefore remember that our strength is so far from being sufficient to resist powerful attacks, that it will give way, when there is the mere shadow of a battle. But in this way God gives us the just reward of our treachery, when he disarms and strips us of all power, so that, when we have thrown off the fear of him, we tremble for a mere nothing. For if a deep fear of God had dwelt in Peter's heart, it would have been an invincible fortress; but now, naked and defenceless, he trembles while he is still far from danger.

70. *But he denied before them all.* This circumstance aggravates the criminality of Peter, that, in denying his Master, he did not even dread a multitude of witnesses.[1] And the Spirit intended expressly to state this, that even the presence of men may excite us to hold fast the confession of faith. For if we deny Christ before the weak, they are shaken by our example, and give way; and thus we destroy

[1] "Qu'il n'a point craint de renier son Maistre, mesmement en la presence de tant de tesmoins;"—"that he did not fear to deny his Master, even in presence of so many witnesses."

as many souls as we can; but if, in presence of those who wickedly despise God and oppose the Gospel, we withhold from Christ the testimony which is due to him, we expose his sacred name to the ridicule of all. In short, as a bold and open confession edifies all the godly,[1] and puts unbelievers to shame, so apostacy draws along with it the public ruin of faith in the Church, and the reproach of sound doctrine. The more eminent a man is, therefore, he ought to be the more careful to be on his guard; for his elevation makes it impossible for him to fall from it without doing greater harm.

I know not what thou sayest. The form of denial, which is here set down, shows sufficiently that the wretched sophists, who endeavour to escape by ambiguous expressions, which they turn to a variety of meanings, when they are called to give an account of their faith, gain nothing by their dexterity in fraud. *Peter* does not absolutely *deny* the whole doctrine of the Gospel; he only *denies* that he *knew the man;* but, because in the person of Christ he indirectly buries the light of the promised redemption, he is charged with base and shameful treachery. But lately he had heard from the mouth of the Lord, that the confession of faith is a sacrifice acceptable to God; and therefore a mode of *denying*, which withholds from God his lawful worship, and from Christ the honour that is due to him, admits of no excuse. Let us therefore hold, that as soon as we depart from a plain and candid profession of Christ, we deprive him of the testimony to which he has a lawful claim.

71. *Another maid saw him.* From the words of Mark we are rather led to conjecture that it was the same *maid;* at least he does not state that it was a different maid from the former one. But there is no contradiction here; for it is probable that the statement which proceeded from one maid, flew from the lips of one to those of another, so that the first maid pointed him out to many persons and at several times, and others joined her in asserting that he was the person, and in spreading the discovery of him more widely. John even relates

[1] "Tous enfans de Dieu;"—"all the children of God."

(xviii. 25) that, at the second time, the question was put to Peter, not by *a maid*, but by a multitude of men; from which it is evident that the word, which had been pronounced by the *maid*, was caught by the men standing by, who attacked Peter.

There is another difference between Mark and the other three Evangelists; for he mentions that *the cock crew twice*, while they say that *the cock crew* not until after Peter had thrice denied our Lord. But this difficulty is easily obviated; for Mark says nothing that is inconsistent with the narrative of the other Evangelists, but explains more fully what they pass by in silence. Indeed, I have no doubt that, when Christ said to Peter, *before the cock crow*, he meant the *cock-crowing*,[1] which includes many *crowings;* for *cocks* do not merely *crow* once, but repeat their *crowings* many times; and yet all the *crowings* of a single watch are called but one *cock-crowing*. So then, Matthew, Luke, and John, say that Peter thrice denied our Lord before the *cock-crowing* was ended. Mark states more distinctly one circumstance, that within a short space of time Peter was brought even to the *third* denial, and that, though he had been warned by the first *crowing*, he did not repent. None of us will say that profane historians are inconsistent with each other, when some one of them relates what the others have not touched; and, therefore, though Mark's narrative is different, still it does not contradict the others.

72. *And the second time he denied with an oath.* It deserves attention, that Peter, after finding that he could not escape by a simple denial, doubles his crime by adding *an oath;* and a little after, when he is still more vehemently pressed, he proceeds even to *cursing*. Hence we infer that a sinner, after having once fallen, is always hurried on from bad to worse; so that those who begin with ordinary offences afterwards rush headlong into the basest crimes, from which at first they would have recoiled with horror. And this is the just vengeance of God, after we have deprived ourselves of the

[1] "L'heure de la nuict en laquelle les coqs chantent;"—"the hour of the night in which cocks crow."

assistance of the Holy Spirit, to allow Satan a violent exercise of power over us, that, having subdued and made us his slaves, he may drive us wherever he pleases. But this happens chiefly in a denial of the faith; for when a man, through fear of the cross, has turned aside from a pure profession of the Gospel, if he perceive that his enemies are not yet satisfied, will proceed farther, and what he had not ventured fully to acknowledge he *denies* flatly *with an oath*, and without any ambiguity of words.

We ought also to observe, that almost in a single moment Peter *thrice* gave way; for this shows how unsteady we are, and how liable to fall, whenever Satan drives us. Certainly we shall never cease to fall, if the Lord do not stretch out his hand to uphold us. When the vigour of the grace of Christ was extinguished in Peter, whoever might afterwards meet him, and interrogate him about Christ, he would have been ready to *deny* a hundred or a thousand times. Although, then, it was very base in him to fall *thrice*, yet the Lord spared him by restraining the tongues of enemies from making additional attacks upon him. Thus, also, it is every day necessary for the Lord to bridle Satan, lest he overwhelm us with innumerable temptations; for though he does not cease to employ many instruments in assailing us, were it not that the Lord, paying regard to our weakness, restrains the violence of his rage, we would have to contend against a prodigious amount of temptations. In this respect, therefore, we ought to praise the mercy of the Lord, who does not permit our enemy to make advances against us, almost the hundredth part of what he would desire.

74. *Then he began to curse and to swear.* In this third denial, Peter's unfaithfulness to his Master reached its utmost height. Not satisfied with *swearing*, he breaks out into *cursing*, by which he abandons his body and soul to destruction; for he prays that the curse of God may fall upon him, if he knows Christ. It is as much as if he had said, May I perish miserably, if I have any thing in common with the salvation of God! So much the more ought we to admire the goodness of Christ, who rescued his disciple from such fatal

ruin, and healed him. Now this passage shows, that when a man, falling through weakness of the flesh, denies the truth, though he knows it, this does not amount to "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit," (Matth. xii. 31, 32.) Peter had unquestionably heard from the mouth of the Lord how detestable treachery it is to deny him before men; and what dreadful vengeance, *before God and before his angels*, (Matth. x. 39; Luke xii. 9,) awaits those who, through a cowardly dread of the cross, abandon the confession of faith; and not without reason had he, a little before, preferred death and every kind of torment to denying Christ. Now, therefore, he throws himself down knowingly, and after previous warning; but afterwards he obtains pardon; from which it follows that he sinned through weakness, and not through incurable malice. For he would willingly have rendered to Christ the duties of friendship which he owed him, had not fear extinguished the sparks of proper affection.

75. *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus.* To the voice of *the cock*, Luke informs us, there was also added the *look* of Christ; for previously—as we learn from Mark—he had paid no attention to the *cock* when *crowing*. He must, therefore, have received the *look* from Christ, in order that he might come to himself. We all have experience of the same thing in ourselves; for which of us does not pass by with indifference and with deaf ears—I do not say the varied and numerous songs of birds, which, however, excite us to glorify God—but even the voice of God, which is heard clearly and distinctly in the doctrine of the Law and of the Gospel? Nor is it for a single day only that our minds are held by such brutal stupidity, but it is perpetual, until he who alone turns the hearts of men deigns to *look* upon us. It is proper to observe, however, that this was no ordinary *look*, for he had formerly *looked* at Judas, who, after all, became no better by it. But in *looking at Peter*, he added to his eyes the secret efficacy of the Spirit, and thus, by the rays of his grace, penetrated into his heart. Let us therefore know, that whenever any one has fallen, his repentance will never begin, until the Lord has *looked* at him.

And he went out and wept bitterly. It is probable that Peter *went out* through fear, for he did not venture to *weep* in presence of witnesses; and here he gave another proof of his weakness. Hence we infer that he did not deserve pardon by satisfaction, but that he obtained it by the fatherly kindness of God. And by this example we are taught that we ought to entertain confident hope, though our repentance be lame; for God does not despise even weak repentance, provided that it be sincere. Yet Peter's tears, which he shed in secret, testified before God and the angels that his repentance was true; for, having withdrawn from the eyes of men, he places before him God and the angels; and, therefore, those tears flow from the deep feelings of his heart. This deserves our attention; for we see many who shed tears purposely, so long as they are beheld by others, but who have no sooner retired than they have dry eyes. Now there is no room to doubt that tears, which do not flow on account of the judgment of God, are often drawn forth by ambition and hypocrisy.

But it may be asked, Is weeping requisite in true repentance? I reply, Believers often with dry eyes groan before the Lord without hypocrisy, and confess their fault to obtain pardon; but in more aggravated offences they must be in no ordinary degree stupid and hardened, whose hearts are not pained by grief and sorrow, and who do not feel ashamed even so far as to shed tears. And, therefore, Scripture, after having convicted men of their crimes, exhorts them to *sackcloth and ashes*, (Dan. ix. 3; Jonah iii. 6; Matth. xi. 21.)

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVII. 1. But when it was morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus, to put him to death. 2. And they led him away bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. 3. Then Judas, who had betrayed him, perceiving that he was condemned, repented, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4. Saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5. And having thrown down the pieces of silver in the temple, he re-	XV. 1. And immediately on the break of day, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, after having	XXIII. 1. And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him away to Pilate.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
tired, and went away, and strangled himself. 6. And the chief priests, having taken the pieces of silver, said, It is not lawful for us to throw them into the treasury, for they are the price of blood. 7. And having taken counsel, they bought with them the potter's field for a burying-place to strangers; 8. For which reason that field is called, The field of blood, to this day. 9. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took thirty pieces of silver, the price of him who was valued, whom they of the children of Israel valued, 10. And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.	deliberated, led Jesus away bound, and delivered him to Pilate.	

Matthew XXVII. 1. *But when it was morning.* The high priest, with his council, after having examined him at an unseasonable hour of the night, finally resolve, at sun-rise, to place him at the bar of the governor. By so doing, they observe the form of judicial proceedings, that they may not be suspected of undue haste, when they run to Pilate at an unusually early hour, as usually happens in cases of tumult. But it is probable, that when Christ had been led away from their council, they immediately held a consultation, and, without long delay, resolved what they would do; for we have been already told at what time Christ went out from them and met Peter, which was after the *cock-crowing*, and just as day was breaking. The Evangelists, therefore, do not mean that they removed from the place,[1] but only relate, that as soon as it was daylight, they condemned Christ to death, and did not lose a moment in earnestly putting into execution their wicked design. What Luke formerly stated, (xxii. 66,) that *they assembled in the morning*, ought not to be explained as referring to the very beginning, but to the last act, which is immediately added: as if he had said, that as soon as it was day, our Lord having acknowledged that he was the Son of God, they pronounced their sentence of his death. Now if they had been permitted to decide in taking away life, they would all have been eager, in their fury, to murder him with their own hands; but as Pilate had cog-

[1] "Du lieu ou ils avoyent esté assemblez la nuict;"—"from the place where they had been assembled during the night."

nizance of capital crimes, they are constrained to refer the matter to his jurisdiction; only they entangle him by their own previous decision.[1] For the stoning of Stephen (Acts vii. 59) took place in a seditious manner, as happens in cases of tumult; but it was proper that the Son of God should be solemnly condemned by an earthly judge, that he might efface our condemnation in heaven.

3. *Then Judas, perceiving that he was condemned.* By this adverb (τότε) *then*, Matthew does not fix the exact point of time; for we shall find him shortly afterwards adding, that Judas, when he saw that the priests disdainfully refused to take back the reward of his treason, threw it down in the temple. But from the house of Caiaphas they came straight to the Pretorium, and stood there until Christ was condemned. It can scarcely be supposed that they were found in the temple on that day; but as the Evangelist was speaking of the rage and madness of the council, he inserted also the death of Judas, by which their blind obstinacy, and the hardness of their hearts like iron, were more fully displayed.

He says that Judas *repented;* not that he reformed, but that the crime which he had committed gave him uneasiness; as God frequently opens the eyes of the reprobate, so as to begin to feel their miseries, and to be alarmed at them. For those who are sincerely grieved so as to reform, are said not only μεταμελεῖν,[2] but also μετανοεῖν,[2] from which is derived also μετάνοια,[2] which is a true conversion of the soul to God. So

[1] "C'est à dire, de l'avis qu'ils en avoyent desja donné en leur conseil;"—"that is to say, by the opinion which they had already given respecting him in their council."

[2] The import of those Greek words is brought out more fully in our Author's French version. "Car ceux qui sont vrayement desplaisans pour s'amender, non seulement cognoissent leurs fautes, mais aussi changent de courage, ce qui est bien ici exprimé;"—"for those who are truly dissatisfied with themselves so as to reform, not only know their faults, but also have the resolution to amend, which is well expressed here." He then goes on to say that Matthew attributes to Judas "une repentance que les Grecs nomment μεταμέλεια, qui est forcee, et laisse l'homme tout abruti; non pas celle qu'ils nomment μετάνοια, qui est une vraye conversion de l'homme à Dieu;"—"a repentance which the Greeks call *metameleia*, (μεταμέλεια,) which is forced, and leaves the man altogether brutish; not that which they call *metanoia*, (μετάνοια,) which is a true conversion of the man to God."

then, Judas conceived disgust and horror, not so as to turn to God, but rather that, being overwhelmed with despair, he might serve as an example of a man entirely shut out from the grace of God. Justly, indeed, does Paul say, that the sorrow which leads to repentance is salutary, (2 Cor. vii. 10;) but if a man stumble at the very threshold, he will derive no advantage from a confused and mistaken grief. What is more, this is a just punishment with which God at length visits the wicked, who have obstinately despised his judgment, that he gives them up to Satan to be tormented without the hope of consolation.

True repentance is displeasure at sin, arising out of fear and reverence for God, and producing, at the same time, a love and desire of righteousness. Wicked men are far from such a feeling; for they would desire to sin without intermission, and even, as far as lies in their power, they endeavour to deceive both God and their own conscience;[1] but notwithstanding their reluctance and opposition, they are tormented with blind horror by their conscience, so that, though they do not hate their sin, still they feel, with sorrow and distress, that it presses heavily and painfully upon them. This is the reason why their grief is useless; for they do not cheerfully turn to God, or even aim at doing better, but, being attached to their wicked desires, they pine away in torment, which they cannot escape. In this way, as I have just said, God punishes their obstinacy; for although his elect are drawn to him by severe chastisements, and as it were contrary to their will, yet he heals in due time the wounds which he has inflicted, so that they come cheerfully to him, by whose hand they acknowledge that they are struck, and by whose wrath they are alarmed. The former, therefore, while they have no hatred to sin, not only dread, but fly from the judgment of God, and thus, having received an incurable wound, they perish in the midst of their sorrows.

If Judas had listened to the warning of Christ, there would still have been place for repentance; but since he despised so gracious an offer of salvation, he is given up to the dominion of Satan, that he may throw him into despair. But

[1] "Et Dieu, et leur propre conscience."

if the Papists were right in what they teach in their schools about *repentance*, we could find no defect in that of Judas, to which their definition of *repentance* fully applies; for we perceive in it contrition of heart, and confession of the mouth, and satisfaction of deed, as they talk. Hence we infer, that they take nothing more than the bark; for they leave out what was the chief point, the conversion of the man to God, when the sinner, broken down by shame and fear, denies himself so as to render obedience to righteousness.

4. *What is that to us?* Here is described the stupidity and madness of the priests, since even after having been warned by the dreadful example of Judas, still they do not think about themselves. I do acknowledge that hypocrites, as they are accustomed to flatter themselves, had some plausible excuse at hand for distinguishing between their case and that of Judas; for they did not think that they were partakers of his crime, though they abused the treachery of Judas. But Judas not only confesses that he has sinned, but asserts the innocence of Christ; from which it follows, that they had meditated the death of a *righteous* man, and, therefore, that they were guilty of a detestable murder. Nor is there any room to doubt that God intended to sear their consciences with a hot iron, to discover the hidden corruption. Let us therefore learn, that when we see wicked persons, with whom we have any thing in common, filled with alarm, those are so many excitements to repentance, and that they who neglect such excitements aggravate their criminality. We ought also to believe, that the crime of one man can have no effect in acquitting all those who are in any way involved in it; and still more, that the leading perpetrators of a crime can gain no advantage by distinguishing between themselves and their agents, that they may not suffer the same punishment.

5. *And he went away, and strangled himself.* This is the price for which Satan sells the allurements by which he flatters wicked men for a time. He throws them into a state of fury, so that, voluntarily cutting themselves off from the hope of salvation, they find no consolation but in death. Though others would have permitted Judas to enjoy the

thirty pieces of silver, by which he had betrayed Christ and his own salvation, he *throws them down*, and not only deprives himself of the use of them, but, along with the base reward of the death of Christ, he throws away also his own life. Thus, though God does not put forth his hand, wicked men are disappointed of their desires, so that, when they have obtained their wishes, they not only deprive themselves of the enjoyment of unsatisfying benefits, but even make cords for themselves. But though they are their own executioners by punishing themselves, they do not in any respect alleviate or diminish the severity of the wrath of God.

6. *It is not lawful for us to throw it into the treasury.* Hence it plainly appears that hypocrites, by attending to nothing more than the outward appearance, are guilty of gross trifling with God. Provided that they do not violate their *Corban*, (Mark vii. 11,) they imagine that in other matters they are pure, and give themselves no concern about the infamous bargain, by which they, not less than Judas, had provoked against themselves the vengeance of God. But if it was *unlawful to put into the* sacred *treasury the price of blood*, why was it *lawful* for them to take the money out of it? for all their wealth was derived from the offerings of the temple, and from no other source did they take what they now scruple to mingle again with it as being polluted. Now, whence came the pollution but from themselves?

8. *For a burying-place to strangers.* The more that wicked men endeavour to conceal their enormities, the more does the Lord watch over them to bring those enormities to light. They hoped that, by an honourable disguise, they would bury their crime, were they to purchase a barren field for *burying strangers.* But the wonderful providence of God turns this arrangement to an opposite result, so that this *field* became a perpetual memorial of that treason, which had formerly been little known. For it was not themselves that gave this name to the place, but after the occurrence was generally known, *the field* was called, by common consent, *The field of blood;* as if God had commanded that their disgrace should

be in every man's mouth. It was a plausible design to provide *a burying-place for strangers*, if any of those who came up to Jerusalem from distant countries, for the purpose of sacrificing, should happen to die there. As some of them were of the Gentiles, I do not disapprove of the opinion of some ancient writers, that this symbol held out the hope of salvation to the Gentiles, because they were included in the price of the death of Christ; but as that opinion is more ingenious than solid, I leave it undetermined. The word *corbana*, (treasury,) is Chaldaic, and is derived from the Hebrew word קרבן, (*corban*,) of which we have spoken elsewhere.

9. *Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet.* How the name of *Jeremiah* crept in, I confess that I do not know, nor do I give myself much trouble to inquire. The passage itself plainly shows that the name of *Jeremiah* has been put down by mistake, instead of Zechariah, (xi. 13;) for in *Jeremiah* we find nothing of this sort, nor any thing that even approaches to it. Now that other passage, if some degree of skill be not used in applying it, might seem to have been improperly distorted to a wrong meaning; but if we attend to the rule which the apostles followed in quoting Scripture, we shall easily perceive that what we find there is highly applicable to Christ. The Lord, after having complained that his labours were of no avail, so long as he discharged the office of a shepherd, says that he is compelled by the troublesome and unpleasant nature of the employment to relinquish it altogether, and, therefore, declares that he will break his crook, and will be a shepherd no longer. He afterwards adds, that when he asked his salary, they gave him *thirty pieces of silver*. The import of these words is, that he was treated quite as contemptuously as if he had been some mean and ordinary labourer. For the ceremonies and vain pretences, by which the Jews recompensed his acts of kindness, are compared by him to *thirty pieces of silver*, as if they had been the unworthy and despicable hire of a cowherd or a day-labourer; and, therefore, he bids them throw it before a *potter* in the temple; as if he had said: "As for this fine present which they make to me, which would not be less dis-

honourable in me to accept than it is contemptuous in them to offer it, let them rather spend it in purchasing tiles or bricks for repairing the chinks of the temple." To make it still more evident that Christ is the God of armies, towards whom the people had been from the beginning malicious and ungrateful, when he *was manifested in the flesh*, (1 Tim. iii. 16,) it became necessary that what had formerly been spoken figuratively should now be literally and visibly accomplished in his person. So, then, when he was compelled by their malice to take leave of them, and to withdraw his labours from them as unworthy of such a privilege, they valued him at *thirty pieces of silver*. And this disdain of the Son of God was the crowning act of their extreme impiety.

The price of him that was valued. Matthew does not quote the words of Zechariah; for he merely alludes to the metaphor, under which the Lord then complains of the ingratitude of the people. But the meaning is the same, that while the Jews ought to have entirely devoted themselves, and all that they possessed, to the Lord, they contemptuously dismissed him with a mean hire; as if, by governing them for so many ages, he had deserved nothing more than any cowherd would have received for the labours of a single year. He complains, therefore, that though he is beyond all estimation, he was rated by them at so low a price.

Whom they of the children of Israel did value. This expression, which he uses towards the close, must be taken in a general sense. Judas had struck a bargain with the priests, who were the avowed representatives of the whole people; so that it was the Jews who set up Christ for sale, and he was sold, as it were, by the voice of the public crier. The price was such as was fit to be given *to a potter*.

10. *As the Lord appointed me.* By this clause Matthew confirms the statement, that this was not done without the providence of God; because, while they have a different object in view, they unconsciously fulfil an ancient prediction. For how could it have occurred to them to *purchase a field* from *a potter*, if the Lord had not turned their blameworthy conduct so as to carry into execution his own purpose?

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVII. 11. Now Jesus stood[1] before the governor. And the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus saith to him, Thou sayest it.[2] 12. And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answerednothing. 13. Then Pilate saith to him, Hearest thou not how many things they testify against thee?[3] 14. And he did not answer him a single word, so that the governor was greatly astonished.	XV. 2. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said to him, Thou sayest it.[2] 3. And the chief priests accused him of many things. 4. And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Lo, how many things do they testify against thee?[3] 5. But Jesus again answered nothing, so that the governor wondered.	XXIII. 2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We have found this man subverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying, that he is the Christ, a King. 3. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said to him, Thou sayest it.[2] 4. And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the multitudes, I find no fault in this man. 5. But they persisted, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee even to this place. 6. And when Pilate heard mention made of Galilee, he asked if the man was a Galilean. 7. And as soon as he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who also was at Jerusalem at that time. 8. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad; for he had long cherished a desire to see him, because he heard many things concerning him; and he hoped that he would see some miracle[4] wrought by him. 9. And he asked him in many words; but he made no reply to him. 10. And the chief priests and scribes stood, and vehemently accused him. 11. But Herod, with his attendants, despised him; and having mocked him, sent him back to Pilate clothed with a shining[5] robe. 12. And on the same day Pilate and Herod became friends; for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

Matthew XXVII. 11. *Now Jesus stood before the governor.* Though it was a shocking exhibition, and highly incompatible with the majesty of the Son of God, to be dragged before the judgment-seat of a profane man, to be tried on the charge of a capital offence, as a malefactor in chains; yet we ought to remember that our salvation consists in the doctrine of the

[1] "Or Jesus fut amené devant le gouverneur."—"Now Jesus was brought before the governor."

[2] "Tu le dis."

[3] "Combien de tesmoignages ils amenent contre-toy?"—"how many testimonies they produce against thee?"

[4] "Quelque signe, *ou, miracle;*"—"some sign, *or, miracle.*"

[5] "D'un vestement blanc, *ou, reluysant;*"—"with a white (*or, shining*) robe."

cross, which is *folly to the Greeks, and an offence to the Jews,* (1 Cor. i. 23.) For the Son of God chose to stand bound before an earthly judge, and there to receive sentence of death,[1] in order that we, delivered from condemnation, may not fear to approach freely to the heavenly throne of God. If, therefore, we consider what advantage we reap from Christ having been tried before Pilate, the disgrace of so unworthy a subjection will be immediately washed away. And certainly none are offended at the condemnation of Christ,[2] but those who are either proud hypocrites, or stupid and gross despisers of God, who are not ashamed of their own iniquity.

So then, the Son of God *stood,* as a criminal, before a mortal man, and there permitted himself to be accused and condemned, that we may *stand* boldly before God. His enemies, indeed, endeavoured to fasten upon him everlasting infamy; but we ought rather to look at the end to which the providence of God directs us. For if we recollect how dreadful is the judgment-seat of God, and that we could never have been acquitted there, unless Christ had been pronounced to be guilty on earth, we shall never be ashamed of glorying in his chains. Again, whenever we hear that Christ *stood before* Pilate with a sad and dejected countenance, let us draw from it grounds of confidence, that, relying on him as our intercessor, we may come into the presence of God with joy and alacrity. To the same purpose is what immediately follows: *he did not answer him a single word.* Christ was silent, while the priests were pressing upon him on every hand; and it was, in order that he might open our mouth by his silence. For hence arises that distinguished privilege of which Paul speaks in such magnificent terms, (Rom. viii. 15,) *that we can boldly cry, Abba, Father;* to which I shall immediately refer again.

Art thou the King of the Jews? Although they attempted to overwhelm Christ by many and various accusations, still it is probable that they maliciously seized on the title of

[1] "Et là estre traitté comme un criminel digne de mort;"—"and there to be treated as a criminal worthy of death."

[2] "De la condamnation à laquelle Christ s'est soumis;"—"at the condemnation to which Christ submitted."

King, in order to excite greater odium against him on the part of Pilate. For this reason Luke expressly represents them as *saying, We have found him subverting the nation, and* FORBIDDING TO GIVE TRIBUTE TO CESAR, *saying that he is the Christ*, A KING. Nothing could have been more odious than this crime to Pilate, whose greatest anxiety was to preserve the kingdom in a state of quietness. From the Evangelist John we learn that he was accused on various grounds; but it is evident from the whole of the narrative that this was the chief ground of accusation. In like manner, even at the present day, Satan labours to expose the Gospel to hatred or suspicion on this plea, as if Christ, by erecting his kingdom, were overturning all the governments of the world, and destroying the authority of kings and magistrates. Kings too are, for the most part, so fiercely haughty, that they reckon it impossible for Christ to reign without some diminution of their own power; and, therefore, they always listen favourably to such an accusation as that which was once brought unjustly against Christ.

On this account Pilate, laying aside all the other points, attends chiefly to the sedition; because, if he had ascertained that Christ had in any way disturbed the public peace, he would gladly have condemned him without delay. This is the reason why he *asks him about the kingdom*. According to the three Evangelists, the answer of Christ is ambiguous; but we learn from John (xviii. 36) that Christ made an open acknowledgment of the fact which was alleged against him; but, at the same time, that he vindicated himself from all criminality by denying that he was an earthly king. But as he did not intend to take pains to vindicate himself, as is usually the case with criminals, the Evangelists put down a doubtful reply; as if they had said, that he did not deny *that he was a king*, but that he indirectly pointed out the calumny which his enemies unjustly brought against him.

12. *He answered nothing*. If it be asked why the Evangelists say that Christ was silent, while we have just now heard his answer from their mouth, the reason is, that he had

a defence at hand, but voluntarily abstained from producing it. And, indeed, what he formerly replied about *the kingdom* did not arise from a desire to be acquitted, but was only intended to maintain that he was the Redeemer anciently promised, *before whom every knee ought to bow*, (Isa. xlv. 23.) *Pilate wondered* at this patience; for Christ, by his silence, allowed his innocence to be suspected, when he might easily have refuted frivolous and unfounded calumnies. The integrity of Christ was such that the judge saw it plainly without any defence. But Pilate wished that Christ might not neglect his own cause, and might thus be acquitted without giving offence to many people. And up to this point, the integrity of Pilate is worthy of commendation, because, from a favourable regard to the innocence of Christ, he urges him to defend himself.

But that we may not, like Pilate, wonder at the silence of Christ, as if it had been unreasonable, we must attend to the purpose of God, who determined that his Son—whom he had appointed to be a sacrifice to atone for our sins—should be condemned as guilty in our room, though in himself he was pure. Christ therefore was at that time silent, that he may now be our advocate, and by his intercession may deliver us from condemnation. He was silent, that we may boast that by his grace we are righteous. And thus was fulfilled the prediction of Isaiah, (liii. 7,) *that he was led as a sheep to the slaughter*. And yet he gave, at the same time, that *good confession*, which Paul mentions, (1 Tim. vi. 12,) a *confession* not by words, but by deeds; not that by which he consulted his own advantage, but that by which he obtained deliverance for the whole human race.

Luke XXIII. 4. *And Pilate said to the chief priests and scribes.* As Christ was come to bear the punishment of our sins, it was proper that he should first be condemned by the mouth of his judge, that it might afterwards be evident that he was condemned for the sake of others, and not for his own. But as Pilate, from a dread of exciting a tumult, did not venture absolutely to acquit him, he willingly availed himself of the opportunity which presented itself, of submitting him

to *the jurisdiction of Herod.* This *Herod* was he who bears the surname of Antipas, to whom was left the tetrarchy of Galilee, when Archelaus was a prisoner at Vienna, and when Judea had been annexed to the province of Syria. Now though we shall shortly afterwards find Luke relating that this mark of respect pacified *Herod*, who had formerly been enraged against *Pilate*, still his design was not so much to obtain *Herod's* favour, as to get quit of a disagreeable affair under an honourable excuse, and thus to avoid the necessity of condemning Christ.

8. *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad.* Hence it is evident how greatly wicked men are intoxicated, or rather bewitched, by their own pride; for though Herod did not acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, he at least reckoned him to be a prophet. It was therefore most unreasonable cruelty to take pleasure in seeing him treated with contempt and disdain. But as if an injury had been done to him, so long as he had not obtained a sight of Christ, when he now sees him placed in his power, he triumphs as if he had obtained a victory. We see also what kind of love is cherished by wicked and irreligious men for prophets, in whom the power of God shines brightly. *Herod had long wished to see Christ.* Why then did he not wish to hear him, that he might profit by his doctrine? It was because he chose rather to amuse himself in beholding the divine power, than to view it, as he ought to have done, with devout and humble reverence. And this is the disposition of the flesh, so to desire to see God in his works, as not to submit to his authority; so to desire to see his servants, as to refuse to hear him speaking by them. And even Herod, though he hoped that some miracle would be performed by Christ, chose to have him placed at his feet as a malefactor rather than to receive him as a teacher. We need not wonder, therefore, if God conceal his glory from wicked men, who wished that he should contribute to their amusement, like some stage-player.

11. *And Herod despised him.* It was impossible but that a haughty man, who valued himself on his luxuries and royal

dignity and wealth, should despise Christ, who had at that time nothing but what was contemptible in his appearance. And yet the pride of *Herod*, which shut the door on the grace of God, admits of no excuse. Nor can it be doubted that God, in order to punish him for his former indifference, purposely hardened his heart by such a spectacle; for he was unworthy of beholding in Christ any ray of heavenly glory; since he had so long shut his eyes on the full brightness, by which his whole country had been illuminated and adorned.

Herod, with his attendants. Luke relates not only that Christ was *despised* by *Herod*, but that he was *despised* by the whole of his retinue; and this is intended to inform us, that the honour which is due to God is seldom rendered to him in the courts of kings. For almost all courtiers, being addicted to pompous display, have their senses pre-occupied by so great vanity, that they carelessly despise, or pass by with closed eyes, the spiritual favours of God. But by this contempt of Christ we have acquired a new dignity, so that we are now held in estimation by God and by angels.

12. *Pilate and Herod became friends.* From the fact that Christ was the occasion of reconciling two wicked men, let us learn how much the children of God, and religion itself, are disdained by the world. It is probable that, in consequence of their own ambition by which both were actuated, some dispute arose about their jurisdiction. But whatever may have been the origin of the quarrel, neither of them would have yielded to the other the smallest portion of his own rights in worldly matters; yet because Christ is set at nought, *Pilate* easily gives him up to *Herod*, and *Herod*, in his turn, sends him back to *Pilate*.[1] Thus in our own day we see, that when the judges enter into disputes with each other about robbers and other malefactors, the children of God are contemptuously thrown aside as if they were the merest refuse.[2] Hatred of religion often produces mutual

[1] "Ne se souciant pas fort de le retenir;"—"without giving themselves much concern about keeping him in their possession."

[2] "Ainsi aujourd'huy, comme ainsi soit que s'il est question de quelques brigans ou autres malfaiteurs, les juges avisent de pres à maintenir leur

harmony among wicked men, so that those who formerly had nothing in common unite together to extinguish the name of God. And yet when wicked men on both sides deliver up the children of God to death, it is not by what they consider to be a valuable price that they purchase mutual friendship, but what appears to them to be of no value whatever they not unwillingly surrender, just as if a person were to throw a crust of bread to a dog. But among us it is proper that Christ should produce a different kind of peace by putting an end to quarrels. Having first been reconciled to God, we ought to assist each other, by a devout and holy agreement, to follow righteousness, and to labour to discharge the duties of brotherly affection and of mutual humanity.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVII. 15. Now the governor was wont at the festival to release to the multitude one prisoner, whomsoever they wished. 16. And they had at that time a notable prisoner, who was called Barabbas. 17. When they were assembled, therefore, Pilate said, Which of them do you wish that I should release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ? 18. For he knew that they had delivered him up through envy. 19. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife	XV. 6. Now at the festival, he was wont to release to them one prisoner, whomsoever they demanded. 7. And there was one who was called Barabbas, who was a prisoner along with his accomplices in the insurrection, that had committed murder in the insurrection. 8. And the multitude, crying out, began to demand that he would do as he had always done to them. 9. And Pilate answered them, saying, Do	XXIII. 13. And Pilate, having assembled the chief priests, and magistrates, and the people, 14. Said to them, You have brought before me this man, as one who subverteth the people; and, lo, having interrogated him in your presence, I find no fault in this man, as to those things of which you accuse him. 15. Nor even Herod; for I sent you to him, and, lo, nothing worthy of death hath been done to him.[1] 16. When I have chastised him, therefore, I will release him. 17. Now he was under the necessity of releasing to them one at

jurisdiction, et en debatent fort et ferme les uns contre les autres, les enfans de Dieu sont par eux jettez là avec desdain, en sorte qu'il semble qu'ils en jouent à triquoter entr'eux."—"Thus in the present day, when a dispute happens to arise about some robbers or other malefactors, the judges are exceedingly attentive to maintain their jurisdiction, and debate about it keenly and warmly between themselves, while the children of God are thrown aside by them with disdain, so that they appear to amuse themselves with it by playing tricks on each other."

[1] "Rien ne luy a esté fait (*ou, rien n'a esté fait par luy*) qui soit digne de mort."—"Nothing hath been done to him (*or, nothing hath been done by him*) that is worthy of death."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
sent to him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things today in a dream on his account. 20. But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude to ask Barabbas, and put Jesus to death. 21. And the governor, answering, said to them, Which of the two do you wish that I shall release to you? And they said, Barabbas. 22. Pilate said to them, What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ? They all say to him, Let him be crucified. 23. And the governor said, But what evil hath he done? But they cried so much the more, saying, Let him be crucified.	you wish me to release to you the King of the Jews? 10. For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him up through envy. 11. And the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he would rather release to them Barabbas. 12. And Pilate answering again, said to them, What then do you wish me to do with him whom you call King of the Jews? 13. But they cried out again, Crucify him. 14. And Pilate said to them, But what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more vehemently, Crucify him.	the festival. 18. Then the whole multitude cried out together, saying, Take away this man, and release to us Barabbas; 19. Who had been put in prison on account of a certain insurrection that had been made in the city, and for murder.[1] 20. And Pilate again spoke to them, desiring to release Jesus. 21. But they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. 22. And a third time he said to them, But what evil hath he done? I find in him no fault worthy of death. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. 23. But they persisted with loud voices, demanding that he should be crucified; and their voices and those of the chief priests prevailed.

Matthew XXVII. 15. *Now the governor was wont at the festival.* Here is described to us, on the one hand, the insatiable cruelty of the priests, and, on the other, the furious obstinacy of the people; for both must have been seized with astonishing madness, when they were not satisfied with conspiring to put to death an innocent man, if they did not also, through hatred of him, release *a robber*. Thus wicked men after having once begun to fall, are driven headlong by Satan, so that they shrink from no crime, however detestable, but, blinded and stupified, add sin to sin. There can be no doubt that *Pilate*, in order to prevail upon them through shame, selected a very wicked man, by contrast with whom Christ might be set free; and the very atrocity of the crime of which *Barabbas* was guilty ought justly to have made the resentment of the people to fall on him, that by comparison

[1] "Avec meurtre;"—"accompanied by murder."

with him, at least, Christ might be released. But no disgrace makes either the priests, or the whole nation, afraid to ask that a seditious man and a murderer should be granted to them.

Meanwhile, we ought to consider the purpose of God, by which Christ was appointed to be crucified, as if he had been the basest of men. The Jews, indeed, rage against him with blinded fury; but as God had appointed him to be a sacrifice (*κάθαρμα*) to atone for the sins of the world,[1] he permitted him to be placed even below a *robber* and *murderer*. That the Son of God was reduced so low none can properly remember without the deepest horror, and displeasure with themselves, and detestation of their own crimes. But hence also arises no ordinary ground of confidence; for Christ was sunk into the depths of ignominy, that he might obtain for us, by his humiliation, an ascent to the heavenly glory: he was reckoned worse than *a robber*, that he might admit us to the society of the angels of God. If this advantage be justly estimated, it will be more than sufficient to remove the offence of the cross.

The custom of having *one of the prisoners released by the governor on the festival*, to gratify the people, was a foolish and improper practice, and, indeed, was an open abuse of the worship of God; for nothing could be more unreasonable than that festivals should be honoured by allowing crimes to go unpunished. God has armed magistrates with the sword, that they may punish with severity those crimes which cannot be tolerated without public injury; and hence it is evident that He does not wish to be worshipped by a violation of laws and punishments. But since nothing ought to be attempted but by the rule of his word, all that men gain by methods of worshipping God which have been rashly contrived by themselves is, that under the pretence of honouring, they often throw dishonour upon Him. We ought

[1] "D'autant que Dieu l'avoit ordonné pour estre celuy sur lequel seroyent mis tous les pechez du monde, à fin que l'expiation et purgation en fust faite;"—"because God had appointed him to be the person on whom should be laid the sins of the world, in order that the expiation and cleansing of them might be accomplished."

therefore to preserve such moderation, as not to offer to God any thing but what he requires; for he is so far from taking pleasure in profane gifts, that they provoke his anger the more.

19. *While he was sitting on the judgment-seat.* Although the thoughts which had passed through the mind of Pilate's wife during the day might be the cause of her *dream*, yet there can be no doubt that she suffered these torments, not in a natural way, (such as happens to us every day,) but by an extraordinary inspiration of God. It has been commonly supposed that the devil stirred up this woman, in order to retard the redemption of mankind; which is in the highest degree improbable, since it was he who excited and inflamed, to such a degree, the priests and scribes to put Christ to death. We ought to conclude, on the contrary, that God the Father took many methods of attesting the innocence of Christ, that it might evidently appear that he suffered death in the room of others,—that is, in our room. God intended that Pilate should so frequently acquit him with his own mouth before condemning him, that in his undeserved condemnation the true satisfaction for our sins might be the more brightly displayed. Matthew expressly mentions this, that none may wonder at the extreme solicitude of Pilate, when he debates with the people, in the midst of a tumult, for the purpose of saving the life of a man whom he despised. And, indeed, by the terrors which his wife had suffered during the night, God compelled him to defend the innocence of his own Son; not to rescue him from death, but only to make it manifest, that in the room of others he endured that punishment which he had not deserved. As to *dreams*, which serve the purpose of visions, we have spoken elsewhere.

20. *But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude.* The Evangelist points out the chief instigators of the wicked proceedings; not that the foolish credulity of the people, who were influenced by others, admits of any excuse; but for the purpose of informing us that they were not, of their own accord, hostile to Christ, but that, having sold themselves

to gratify the priests, they forget all justice and modesty,[1] as well as their own salvation. Hence we learn how pernicious is the influence of wicked men, who can easily turn in every direction, to all kind of wickedness, the giddy and changeful multitude. Yet we must attend to the design of the Evangelist, which was to show, that the death of Christ was so eagerly demanded by the voice of the people, not because he was universally hated, but because the greater part of them, ambitiously desirous to follow the inclination of their rulers, threw aside all regard to justice, and might be said to have sold and enslaved their tongue to the wicked conspiracy of a few.

22. *What then shall I do with Jesus?* Perceiving that they are so blinded by madness, that they do not hesitate, to their own great dishonour, to rescue *a robber* from death, Pilate resorts to another expedient for touching them to the quick, and bringing them to a sound mind. He argues that the death of Christ would bring disgrace on themselves, because it had been commonly reported of Jesus, that he was the King and the Christ. As if he had said, "If you have no compassion for the man, pay some regard, at least, to your own honour; for it will be generally thought by foreigners, that he was put to death for a chastisement to you all."[2] Yet even this did not abate the fierceness of their cruelty, or hinder them from proceeding to manifest a greater degree of opposition to the public interests than of private hostility to Christ. Thus, according to Mark, Pilate, in order to wound them still more deeply, says that even themselves call Jesus *the King;* meaning, that this title was constantly used, as if it had been his ordinary surname. Yet, throwing aside all shame, they obstinately insist on the murder of Christ, which brought along with it the disgrace of the whole nation. The Evangelist John (xix. 15) states a reply, which the other three Evangelists do not mention; namely, that *they had no king*

[1] "Toute equité, modestie, et honnesteté;"—"all justice, modesty, and propriety."

[2] "Pour vous chastier, et vous faire despit à tous;"—"to chastise you, and pour contempt on you all."

but Cesar. Thus they choose rather to be deprived of the hope of the promised redemption, and to be devoted to perpetual slavery, than to receive the Redeemer, whom God had offered to them.

Luke XXIII. 16. *I will therefore chastise him, and release him.* If any slight offence had been committed, which was not a capital crime, the Roman governors[1] were wont to cause the offenders to be beaten with rods; and this kind of punishment was called, in the Latin language, *coërctio.* Pilate, therefore, acts unjustly when, after pronouncing Christ to be free from all blame, he resolves to punish him, as if he had been guilty of an ordinary offence; for he not only declares that he has found in him no crime worthy of death, but asserts his innocence in the most unqualified manner. Why, then, does he beat him with rods? But earthly men, who are not confirmed by the Spirit of God in a constant wish to do what is right, even though they are desirous to maintain integrity, are accustomed, in this manner, to yield so far as to commit small injuries, when they are compelled. And not only do they reckon it a valid excuse, that they have not perpetrated a very heinous crime, but they even claim for themselves the praise of mildness, because they have, to some extent, spared the innocent. As to the Son of God, had he been dismissed in this manner, he would have carried with him the shame of having been scourged, without any advantage to our salvation; but on the cross, as in a magnificent chariot, he triumphed over his enemies and ours.

Would to God[2] that the world were not now filled with many Pilates! But we see that what was begun in the head is accomplished in the members. The Popish clergy persecute his holy servants with the same cruelty with which the Jewish priests cried out, demanding that Christ should be put to death. Many of the judges, indeed, willingly offer themselves as executioners to follow out their rage;[3] but

[1] "Les Gouverneurs deputez de par l'Empereur de Rome;"—"the Governors appointed by the Emperor of Rome."

[2] "Pleust à Dieu."

[3] "Entre les juges, la plus grand' part ne demandent pas mieux que de

when they shrink from shedding blood, so as to save innocent men from dying, they scourge Christ himself, who is the only righteousness of God. For when they compel the worshippers of God to deny the Gospel, for the purpose of saving their life, what else is it than to cause the name of Christ to undergo the disgrace of being beaten with rods? Yet in their defence they plead the violence of his enemies; as if this pretence were a sufficient cloak for their treacherous cowardice, which, if it was not excusable in Pilate, deserves to be viewed in them with the highest detestation. But though our three Evangelists pass by this circumstance, yet it is evident from the Evangelist John, (xix. 1,) that Christ was beaten with rods, while Pilate was still labouring to save his life, in order that so appalling a spectacle might appease the rage of the people. But John has also added, that it could not be appeased until the Author of life was put to death.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.
XXVII. 24. But Pilate, perceiving that he gained nothing by it, but that the tumult became the greater, took water, and washed his hands before the people, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see you to it. 25. And the whole people, answering, said, His blood be on us and on our children. 26. Then he released to them Barabbas, and after having scourged Jesus, he delivered him up to be crucified. 27. Then the soldiers of the governor conducted Jesus into the Pretorium, and gathered around him the whole band. 28. And having	XV. 15. Pilate then wishing to satisfy the multitude, released Barabbas to them, and after having scourged Jesus, he delivered him up to be crucified. 16. And the soldiers conducted him into the hall, which is the Pretorium; and they gather together the whole band. 17. And they clothe him with purple, and put upon his head a crown interwoven with thorns. 18. And they began to salute him, Hail, King of the	XXIII. 24. And Pilate decided that what they demanded should be done. 25. And he released to them him who, for sedition and murder, had been put in prison, whom they had desired; and delivered up Jesus to their will. 26. And as they were leading him away, they seized one Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming out of the country, and laid the cross upon him, to carry it after Jesus. 27. And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women, who also bewailed and lamented him. 28. And Jesus turning to them

servir de bourreaux pour executer la rage des supposts de l'Antechrist."—"Among the judges, the greater part ask nothing better than to act as hangmen to execute the rage of the supporters of Antichrist."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
stripped him, they put on him a scarlet robe. 29. And having wreathed a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand; and kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30. And having spat on him, they took the reed and struck him on the head. 31. And after having mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. 32. And as they were going out, they found a Cyrenian named Simon: him they constrained to bear his cross.	Jews! 19. And they struck him on the head with a reed, and spat on him; and kneeling, they worshipped him. 20. And having mocked him, they stripped him of the purple, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. 21. And they compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, who was passing by, who was coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.	said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29. For, lo, the days will come in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that did not bear, and the breasts which did not give suck. 30. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. 31. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? 32. Two others also, who were malefactors, were led with him to be crucified.

Matthew XXVII. 24. *But Pilate, perceiving that he gained nothing by it.* As sailors, who have experienced a violent tempest, at last give way, and permit themselves to be carried out of the proper course; so Pilate, finding himself unable to restrain the commotion of the people, lays aside his authority as a judge, and yields to their furious outcry. And though he had long attempted to hold out, still the necessity does not excuse him; for he ought rather to have submitted to any amount of suffering than to have swerved from his duty. Nor is his guilt alleviated by the childish ceremony which he uses; for how could a few drops of water wash away the stain of a crime which no satisfaction of any kind could obliterate? His principal object in doing so was not to wash out his stains before God, but to exhibit to the people a mark of abhorrence, to try if perhaps he might lead them to repent of their fury; as if he had employed such a preface as this, "Lo, you compel me to an unrighteous murder, to which I cannot come but with trembling and horror. What then shall become of you, and what dreadful vengeance of God awaits you, who are the chief actors in the deed?" But whatever might be the design of Pilate, God intended

to testify, in this manner, the innocence of his Son, that it might be more manifest that in him our sins were condemned. The supreme and sole Judge of the world is placed at the bar of an earthly judge, is condemned to crucifixion as a malefactor, and—what is more—is placed between two robbers, as if he had been the prince of robbers. A spectacle so revolting might, at first sight, greatly disturb the senses of men, were it not met by this argument, that the punishment which had been due to us was laid on Christ, so that, our guilt having now been removed, we do not hesitate to come into the presence of the Heavenly Judge. Accordingly, the *water*, which was of no avail for washing away the filth of Pilate, ought to be efficacious, in the present day, for a different purpose, to cleanse our eyes from every obstruction, that, in the midst of condemnation, they may clearly perceive the righteousness of Christ.

25. *His blood be on us.* There can be no doubt that the Jews pronounced this curse on themselves without any concern, as if they had been fully convinced that they had a righteous cause before God; but their inconsiderate zeal carries them headlong, so that, while they commit an irreparable crime, they add to it a solemn imprecation, by which they cut themselves off from the hope of pardon. Hence we infer how carefully we ought to guard against headlong rashness in all our judgments. For when men refuse to make inquiry, and venture to decide in this or the other matter according to their own fancy, blind impulse must at length carry them to rage. And this is the righteous vengeance of God with which he visits the pride of those who do not deign to take the trouble of distinguishing between right and wrong. The Jews thought that, in slaying Christ, they were performing a service acceptable to God; but whence arose this wicked error, unless from wicked obstinacy, and from despising God himself? Justly, therefore, were they abandoned to this rashness of drawing upon themselves final ruin. But when the question relates to the worship of God and his holy mysteries, let us learn to open our eyes, and to inquire into the matter with reverence and

sobriety, lest through hypocrisy and presumption we become stupified and enraged.

Now as God would never have permitted this execrable word to proceed from the mouth of the people, if their impiety had not been already desperate, so afterwards he justly revenged it by dreadful and unusual methods; and yet by an incredible miracle he reserved for himself some remnant, that his covenant might not be abolished by the destruction of the whole nation. He had adopted for himself the seed of Abraham, that it might be *a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, his peculiar people and inheritance*, (1 Pet. ii. 9.) The Jews now conspire, as with one voice, to renounce a favour so distinguished. Who would not say that the whole nation was utterly rooted out from the kingdom of God? But God, through their treachery, renders more illustrious the fidelity of his promise, and, to show that he did not in vain make a covenant with Abraham, he rescues from the general destruction those whom he has elected by free grace. Thus the truth of God always rises superior to all the obstacles raised by human unbelief.

26. *Then he released to them Barabbas.* Our three Evangelists do not mention what is related by John, (xix. 13,) that Pilate ascended the judgment-seat to pronounce sentence from it; for they only state that the clamour of the people and the confused tumult prevailed on him basely to deliver up Christ to death. But both of these things must be observed, that a compliance was forced from him contrary to his will, and yet that he exercised the office of a judge in condemning him whom he pronounces to be innocent. For if the Son of God had not been free from all sin, we would have had no right to look for satisfaction from his death; and, on the other hand, if he had not become our surety, to endure the punishment which we had deserved, we would now have been involved in the condemnation of our sins. So then God determined that his Son should be condemned in a solemn manner, that he might acquit us for his sake.

But even the severity of the punishment serves to confirm

our faith, not less than to impress our minds with dread of the wrath of God, and to humble us by a conviction of our miseries. For if we are desirous to profit aright by meditating on the death of Christ, we ought to begin with cherishing abhorrence of our sins, in proportion to the severity of the punishment which he endured. This will cause us not only to feel displeasure and shame of ourselves, but to be penetrated with deep grief, and therefore to seek the medicine with becoming ardour, and at the same time to experience confusion and trembling. For we must have hearts harder than stones, if we are not cut to the quick by the wounds of the Son of God, if we do not hate and detest our sins, for expiating which the Son of God endured so many torments. But as this is a display of the dreadful vengeance of God, so, on the other hand, it holds out to us the most abundant grounds of confidence; for we have no reason to fear that our sins, from which the Son of God acquits us by so valuable a ransom, will ever again be brought into judgment before God. For not only did he endure an ordinary kind of death, in order to obtain life for us, but along with the cross he took upon him our curse, that no uncleanness might any longer remain in us.

27. *Then the soldiers of the governor.* It is not without reason that these additional insults are related. We know that it was not some sort of ludicrous exhibition, when God exposed his only-begotten Son to every kind of reproaches. First, then, we ought to consider what we have deserved, and, next, the satisfaction offered by Christ ought to awaken us to confident hope. Our filthiness deserves that God should hold it in abhorrence, and that all the angels should *spit* upon us; but Christ, in order to present us pure and unspotted in presence of the Father, resolved to be *spat upon*, and to be dishonoured by every kind of reproaches. For this reason, that disgrace which he once endured on earth obtains for us favour in heaven, and at the same time restores in us the image of God, which had been not only stained, but almost obliterated, by the pollutions of sin. Here, too, is brightly displayed the inconceivable mercy of God towards us, in

bringing his only-begotten Son so low on our account. This was also a proof which Christ gave of his astonishing love towards us, that there was no ignominy to which he refused to submit for our salvation. But these matters call for secret meditation, rather than for the ornament of words.

We are also taught that the kingdom of Christ ought not to be estimated by the sense of the flesh, but by the judgment of faith and of the Spirit. For so long as our minds grovel in the world, we look upon his kingdom not only as contemptible, but even as loaded with shame and disgrace; but as soon as our minds rise by faith to heaven, not only will the spiritual majesty of Christ be presented to us, so as to obliterate all the dishonour of the cross, but the *spittings*, *scourgings*, *blows*, and other indignities, will lead us to the contemplation of his glory; as Paul informs us, that *God hath given him a name, and the highest authority, that before him every knee might bow, because he willingly emptied himself* (ἐκένωσε) *even to the death of the cross*, (Philip. ii. 8–10.) If, therefore, even in the present day, the world insolently mocks at Christ, let us learn to rise above these offences by elevated faith; and let us not stop to inquire, what unworthy opposition is made to Christ by wicked men, but with what ornaments the Father hath clothed him, with what sceptre and with what crown he hath adorned him, so as to raise him high, not only above men, but even above all the angels.

Mark uses the word *purple* instead of *scarlet;* but though these are different colours, we need not trouble ourselves much about that matter. That Christ was clothed with a costly garment is not probable; and hence we infer that it was not *purple*, but something that bore a resemblance to it, as a painter counterfeits truth by his likenesses.

32. *They found a man, a Cyrenian.* This circumstance points out the extreme cruelty both of the Jewish nation and of the soldiers. There is no reason to doubt that it was then the custom for malefactors to carry their own crosses to the place of punishment, but as the only persons who were crucified were robbers, who were men of great bodily strength, they were able to bear such a burden. It was otherwise with

Christ, so that the very weakness of his body plainly showed that it was a lamb that was sacrificed. Perhaps, too, in consequence of having been mangled by scourging, and broken down by many acts of outrage, he bent under the weight of the cross. Now the Evangelists relate that the soldiers *constrained* a man who was a peasant, and of mean rank, *to carry the cross;* because that punishment was reckoned so detestable, that every person thought himself polluted, if he only happened to put his hand to it.[1] But God ennobles by his heralds the man who was taken from the lowest dregs of the people to perform a mean and infamous office; for it is not a superfluous matter, that the Evangelists not only mention his name, but inform us also about his country and his children. Nor can there be any doubt that God intended, by this preparation, to remind us that we are of no rank or estimation in ourselves, and that it is only from the cross of his Son that we derive eminence and renown.

Luke XXIII. 27. *And there followed him.* Although in public all the people, with one shout, had condemned Christ, yet we see that there were some who had not forgotten his doctrine and miracles; and thus, in the midst of that miserable dispersion, God reserved for himself a small remnant. And though the faith of those *women* was weak, yet it is probable that there was a hidden seed of piety, which afterwards in due time produced fruit. Yet their *lamentation* served to condemn the wicked and shocking cruelty of the men, who had conspired with the scribes and priests to put Christ to death. But Luke's design was different, namely, to inform us, that when the wickedness of men breaks out into unrestrained disorder, God does not indolently look on, to see what they are doing, but sits as a judge in heaven, to punish them soon for their unjust cruelty; and that we ought not to despise his vengeance, because he delays it till the proper time, but that we ought to dread it before he appears.

28. *Weep not.* Some have thought that the *women* are

[1] "S'il luy fust advenu d'y mettre la main."

reproved, because foolishly and inconsiderately they poured out *tears* to no purpose. On the contrary, Christ does not simply reprove them, as if it were improperly and without a cause that they were *weeping*, but warns them that there will be far greater reason for *weeping* on account of the dreadful judgment of God which hangs over them; as if he had said, that his death was not the end, but the beginning, of evils to Jerusalem and to the whole nation; and in this way he intimates, that he was not abandoned to the wickedness of man in such a manner as not to be the object of Divine care. For, from the punishment which immediately followed, it was manifest that the life of Christ was dear to God the Father, at the time when all imagined that he had been wholly forsaken and cast off.

These words do indeed show plainly with what exalted fortitude Christ was endued; for he could not have spoken in this manner, if he had not advanced to death with a steady and firm step. But the principal object is to show, that under this mean and revolting aspect he is still under the eye of God, and that wicked men, who now proudly triumph, as if they had obtained a victory, will not long enjoy their foolish mirth, for it will quickly be followed by an astonishing change. This doctrine is even now of use to us, when we learn that Christ was not less dear to his Father, because for a moment he was deprived of his aid, but that he set so high a value on our salvation, that he did not even spare his only-begotten Son. He gave a remarkable proof of this, when he razed to the foundation, and destroyed, along with its inhabitants, the Holy City, in which he had chosen his only sanctuary. Let us learn from this to rise to meditation on the cause of the death of Christ; for since God revenged it with such severity, he would never have permitted his Son to endure it, unless he had intended that it should be an expiation for the sins of the world.

29. *For, lo, the days will come.* He threatens, that a calamity which is not usual, but fearful and unheard of, is at hand, in which will be perceived, at a glance, the vengeance of God. As if he had said, that this nation will not be

carried away by a single or ordinary kind of destruction, but that it will perish under a mass of numerous and great calamities, so that it would be much more desirable that *the mountains should fall upon them*, and crush them, or that the earth should open and swallow them up, than that they should pine away amidst the cruel torments of a lingering destruction. Nor did those threatenings fall to the ground without effect, but this thunder of words was surpassed by the awful result, as is evident from Josephus. And as the wish to be crushed by the mountains, and the cursing of their children, were expressive of the lowest despair, Christ taught by these words that the Jews would at length feel that they had made war, not with a mortal man, but with God. Thus shall the enemies of God reap the just reward of their impious rage, when they who formerly dared even to attack heaven, shall in vain desire to employ the earth as a shield against his vengeance.

31. *If they do these things in the green tree.* By this sentence Christ confirms what he had stated, that his death will not remain unpunished, and that the Jews, whose iniquity is ripe, or rather half-rotten, will not remain long in their present condition; and by a familiar comparison, he proves it to be impossible but that the fire of the divine wrath shall immediately kindle and devour them. We know that *dry* wood is wont to be first thrown into the fire; but if what is moist and *green* be burnt, much less shall *the dry* be ultimately spared. The phrase, *if they do*, may be taken indefinitely for *if it be done*;[1] and the meaning will be: "If *green* wood is thrown into the fire before the time, what, think you, shall become of what is *dry* and old?" But some perhaps will prefer to view it as a comparison of men with God, as if Christ had said: "Wicked men, who resemble *dry* wood, when they have basely murdered the righteous, will find that their time is prepared by God. For how could they who are already devoted to destruction escape the hand of the

[1] "Pour *si on fait*."

heavenly Judge, who grants them so much liberty for a time against the good and innocent?"

Whether you choose to interpret it in the one or the other of these ways, the general meaning is, that the *lamentation of the women* is foolish, if they do not likewise expect and dread the awful judgment of God which hangs over the wicked. And whenever our distress of mind, arising from the bitterness of the cross, goes to excess, it is proper to soothe it by this consolation, that God, who now permits his own people to be unjustly oppressed, will not ultimately allow the wicked to escape punishment. If we were not sustained by this hope, we must unavoidably sink under our afflictions. Though it be the natural and more frequent practice to make a fire of *dry* wood rather than of *green* wood, yet God pursues a different order; for, while he allows tranquillity and ease to the reprobate, he trains his own people by a variety of afflictions, and therefore their condition is more wretched than that of others, if we judge of it from the present appearance. But this is an appropriate remedy, if we patiently look for the whole course of the judgment of God; for thus we shall perceive that the wicked gain nothing by a little delay; for when God shall have humbled his faithful servants by fatherly chastisements, he will rise with a drawn sword against those whose sins he appeared for a time not to observe.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVII. 33. And they came to a place which is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary.[1] 34. And they gave him to drink vinegar mingled with gall; and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. 35. And after they had crucified him, they parted his garments by casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which	XV. 22. And they bring him to the place of Golgotha, which is, if you interpret it, The place of Calvary.[1] 23. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but he did not receive it. 24. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, (to decide) what every one should	XXIII. 33. Having come to the place which is called Calvary,[2] there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one at his right hand, and the other at his left. 34. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they

[1] "Qui vaut autant à dire que, La place de test;"—"which may be interpreted, The place of a skull."

[2] "Au lieu qui est appelé Le test, ou, Calvaire;"—"to the place which is called The skull, *or*, *Calvary*."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments, and cast lots on my raiment. 36. And sitting down, they watched him there. 37. And they placed over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38. Then were crucified with him two robbers, one at his right hand, and the other at his left.	take. 25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.[1] 26. And the inscription of his accusation was written, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27. And they crucify with him two robbers, one at his right hand, and the other at his left. 28. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith,[2] And he was ranked with malefactors.	know not what they do. And, parting his garments, they cast lots. (*A little after.*) 38. And there was also an inscription written over him, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew characters, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Matthew XXVII. 33. *And they came to the place.* Jesus was *brought to the place* where it was customary to execute criminals, that his death might be more ignominious. Now though this was done according to custom, still we ought to consider the loftier purpose of God; for he determined that his Son should be cast out of the city as unworthy of human intercourse, that he might admit us into his heavenly kingdom with the angels. For this reason the apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (xiii. 12,) refers it to an ancient figure of the law. For as God commanded his people to *burn without the camp* the bodies of those animals, the blood of which was carried into the sanctuary to make atonement for sins, (Exod. xxix. 14; Lev. xvi. 27;) so he says that Christ went out of the gate of the city, that, by taking upon him the curse which pressed us down, he might be regarded as accursed, and might in this manner atone for our sins.[3] Now the greater the ignominy and disgrace which he endured before the world, so much the more acceptable and noble a spectacle did he exhibit in his death to God and to the angels. For the infamy of the place did not hinder him from erecting there a splendid trophy of his victory; nor did the offensive smell of the carcases which lay there hinder the sweet savour

[1] "Or il estoit trois heures quand ils le crucifierent;"—"now it was the third hour when they crucified him."

[2] "Ainsi fut accomplie l'Escriture, qui dit;"—"thus was fulfilled the Scripture, which saith."

[3] "Et effaçast nos pechez, et en fist la satisfaction;"—"and might blot out our sins, and make satisfaction for them."

of his sacrifice from diffusing itself throughout the whole world, and penetrating even to heaven.

34. *And they gave him vinegar.* Although the Evangelists are not so exact in placing each matter in its due order, as to enable us to fix the precise moment at which the events occurred; yet I look upon it as a probable conjecture that, before our Lord was elevated on the cross, there was offered to him in a cup, according to custom, *wine mingled with myrrh*, or some other mixture, which appears to have been compounded of *gall and vinegar*. It is sufficiently agreed, indeed, among nearly all interpreters, that this draught was different from that which is mentioned by John, (xix. 29,) and of which we shall speak very soon. I only add, that I consider the cup to have been offered to our Lord when he was about to be crucified; but that after the cross was lifted up, *a sponge* was then dipt and given to him. At what time he began to ask something to drink, I am not very anxious to inquire; but when we compare all the circumstances, it is not unreasonable to suppose that, after he had refused that bitter mixture, it was frequently in derision presented to his lips. For we shall find Matthew afterwards adding that the soldiers, while they were giving him to drink, upbraided him for not being able to rescue himself from death. Hence we infer that, while the remedy was offered, they ridiculed the weakness of Christ, because he had complained that he was forsaken by God, (Matth. xxvii. 49.)

As to the Evangelist John's narrative, it is only necessary to understand that Christ requested that some ordinary beverage might be given him to assuage his thirst, but that *vinegar, mingled with myrrh and gall*, was attempted to be forced upon him for hastening his death. But he patiently bore his torments, so that the lingering pain did not lead him to desire that his death should be hastened; for even this was a part of his sacrifice and obedience, to endure to the very last the lingering exhaustion.

They are mistaken, in my opinion, who look upon the *vinegar* as one of the torments which were cruelly inflicted on the Son of God. There is greater probability in the con-

jecture of those who think that this kind of beverage had a tendency to promote the evacuation of blood, and that on this account it was usually given to malefactors, for the purpose of accelerating their death. Accordingly, Mark calls it *wine mingled with myrrh.* Now Christ, as I have just now hinted, was not led to refuse the *wine* or *vinegar* so much by a dislike of its bitterness, as by a desire to show that he advanced calmly to death, according to the command of the Father, and that he did not rush on heedlessly through want of patience for enduring pain. Nor is this inconsistent with what John says, that the Scripture was fulfilled, *In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*[1] For the two accounts perfectly agree with each other; that a remedy was given to him in order to put an end to the torments of a lingering death, and yet that Christ was in every respect treated with harshness, so that the very alleviation was a part, or rather was an augmentation, of his pain.

35. *They parted his garments.* It is certain that the soldiers did this also according to custom, in dividing among themselves the clothes of a man who had been condemned to die. One circumstance was perhaps peculiar, that *they cast lots* on a *coat* which *was without seam,* (John xix. 23.) But though nothing happened to Christ in this respect but what was done to all who were condemned to die, still this narrative deserves the utmost attention. For the Evangelists exhibit to us the Son of God stripped of his garments, in order to inform us, that by this nakedness we have obtained those riches which make us honourable in the presence of God. God determined that his own Son should be stripped of his raiment, that we, clothed with his righteousness and with abundance of all good things, may appear with boldness in company with the angels, whereas formerly our loathsome and disgraceful aspect, in tattered garments, kept us back from approaching to heaven. Christ himself permitted his

[1] Our Author quotes the words of the prophecy, as they are found in Psalm lxix. 11, though the Evangelist John (xix. 28) merely alludes to them by the general statement: *Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.—Ed.*

garments to be torn in pieces like a prey, that he might enrich us with the riches of his victory.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. When Matthew says that thus was fulfilled the prediction of David, *they part my garments among them, and cast the lot upon my vesture,* (Ps. xxii. 18,) we must understand his meaning to be, that what David complained of, as having been done to himself metaphorically and figuratively, was literally, (as the common phrase is,) and in reality, exhibited in Christ. For by the word *garments* David means his wealth and honours; as if he had said that, during his life, and under his own eyes, he was a prey to enemies, who had robbed his house, and were so far from sparing the rest of his property, that they even carried off his wife. This cruelty is represented even more strikingly by the metaphor, when he says that *his garments were divided by lot.* Now as he was a shadow and image of Christ, he predicted, by the spirit of prophecy, what Christ was to suffer. In his person, therefore, this is worthy of observation, that the soldiers plundered his raiment, because in this pillage we discern the signs and marks by which he was formerly pointed out. It serves also to remove the offence with which the sense of the flesh might otherwise have regarded his nakedness, since he suffered nothing which the Holy Spirit does not declare to belong truly and properly to the person of the Redeemer.

Mark XV. 25. *And it was the third hour.* This appears not to agree well with the testimony of the Evangelist John; for he relates that Christ was condemned *about the sixth hour,* (xix. 14.) But if we consider—what is evident from other passages—that the day was divided into four parts, and that each of the parts took its name from the first hour of its commencement, the solution will not be difficult. The whole time, from sunrise to the second part of the day, they called the *first* hour. The second part, which lasted till noon, was called by them the *third* hour. The *sixth* hour commenced at noon, and lasted till three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Thus, when the Jews saw that Pilate was wearing out the time, and that the hour of noon was approaching, John says

that *they cried out* the more vehemently, that the whole day might not be allowed to pass without something being done, (xix. 15.) But this is not inconsistent with the assertion, that our Lord was crucified about the close of *the third hour*; for it is plain enough, that no sooner was he hastily condemned, than he was immediately executed; so eager was the desire of the Jews to put him to death. Mark therefore means not the beginning, but the close, of the third hour; and it is highly probable that Christ did not hang on the cross longer than three hours.

Luke XXIII. 34. *And Jesus said, Father, forgive them.* By this expression Christ gave evidence that he was that mild and gentle lamb, which was to be led out to be sacrificed, as Isaiah the prophet had foretold, (liii. 7.) For not only does he abstain from revenge, but pleads with God the Father for the salvation of those by whom he is most cruelly tormented. It would have been a great matter not to think of *rendering evil for evil*, (1 Pet. iii. 9;) as Peter, when he exhorts us to patience by the example of Christ, says that he did not render curses for curses, and did not revenge the injuries done to him, but was fully satisfied with having God for his avenger, (1 Pet. ii. 23.) But this is a far higher and more excellent virtue, to pray that God would *forgive* his enemies.

If any one think that this does not agree well with Peter's sentiment, which I have just now quoted, the answer is easy. For when Christ was moved by a feeling of compassion to ask forgiveness from God for his persecutors, this did not hinder him from acquiescing in the righteous judgment of God, which he knew to be ordained for reprobate and obstinate men. Thus when Christ saw that both the Jewish people and the soldiers raged against him with blind fury, though their ignorance was not excusable, he had pity on them, and presented himself as their intercessor. Yet knowing that God would be an avenger, he left to him the exercise of judgment against the desperate. In this manner ought believers also to restrain their feelings in enduring distresses, so as to desire the salvation of their persecutors, and yet to

rest assured that their life is under the protection of God, and, relying on this consolation, that the licentiousness of wicked men will not in the end remain unpunished, not to faint under the burden of the cross.

Of this moderation Luke now presents an instance in our Leader and Master; for though he might have denounced perdition against his persecutors, he not only abstained from cursing, but even prayed for their welfare. But it ought to be observed that, when the whole world rises against us, and all unite in striving to crush us, the best remedy for overcoming temptation is, to recall to our remembrance the blindness of those who fight against God in our persons. For the result will be, that the conspiracy of many persons against us, when solitary and deserted, will not distress us beyond measure; as, on the other hand, daily experience shows how powerfully it acts in shaking weak persons, when they see themselves attacked by a great multitude. And, therefore, if we learn to raise our minds to God, it will be easy for us to look down, as it were, from above, and despise the ignorance of unbelievers; for whatever may be their strength and resources, still *they know not what they do.*

It is probable, however, that Christ did not pray for all indiscriminately, but only for the wretched multitude, who were carried away by inconsiderate zeal, and not by premeditated wickedness. For since the scribes and priests were persons in regard to whom no ground was left for hope, it would have been in vain for him to pray for them. Nor can it be doubted that this prayer was heard by the heavenly Father, and that this was the cause why many of the people afterwards drank by faith the blood which they had shed.

37. *And placed over his head.* What is briefly noticed by Matthew and Mark is more fully related by Luke, (xxiii. 38,) that the inscription was written in three languages. John also describes it more largely, (xix. 19–22.) Under this passage my readers will find what I pass over here for the sake of brevity. I shall only say, that it did not happen without the providence of God, that the death of Christ was made known in three languages. Though Pilate had no

other design than to bring reproach and infamy on the Jewish nation, yet God had a higher end in view; for by this presage he caused it to be widely known that the death of his Son would be highly celebrated, so that all nations would everywhere acknowledge that he was *the King* promised to *the Jews*. This was not, indeed, the lawful preaching of the Gospel, for Pilate was unworthy to be employed by God as a witness for his Son; but what was afterwards to be accomplished by the true ministers was prefigured in Pilate. In short, we may look upon him to be a herald of Christ in the same sense that Caiaphas was a prophet, (John xi. 51.)

38. *Then were crucified with him two robbers.* It was the finishing stroke of the lowest disgrace when Christ was executed between *two robbers;* for they assigned him the most prominent place, as if he had been the prince of *robbers*. If he had been *crucified* apart from the other malefactors, there might have appeared to be a distinction between his case and theirs; but now he is not only confounded with them, but raised aloft, as if he had been by far the most detestable of all. On this account Mark applies to him the prediction of Isaiah, (liii. 12,) *he was reckoned among transgressors;* for the prophet expressly says concerning Christ, that he will deliver his people, not by pomp and splendour, but because he will endure the punishment due to their sins. In order that he might free us from condemnation, this kind of expiation was necessary, that he might place himself in our room. Here we perceive how dreadful is the weight of the wrath of God against sins, for appeasing which it became necessary that Christ, who is eternal justice, should be ranked with robbers. We see, also, the inestimable love of Christ towards us, who, in order that he might admit us to the society of the holy angels, permitted himself to be classed as one of the wicked.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVII. 39. And they that passed by reviled him, shaking their heads, 40. And saying, Thou who destroyedst the temple, and buildedst it in three days, save thyself; if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41. In like manner also the chief priests mocking, with the scribes and elders, said, 42. He saved others, himself he cannot save; if he is the King of Israel, let him now descend from the cross, and we will believe him. 43. He trusted in God. Let him deliver him now, if he favours him; for he said, I am the Son of God. 44. The robbers also, who were crucified with him, upbraided him in the same manner.	XV. 29. And they that passed by reviled him, shaking their heads, and saying, Ah, thou who destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, 30. Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31. In like manner also the chief priests mocking, said among themselves, with the scribes, He saved others, himself he cannot save. 32. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him upbraided him.	XXIII. 35. And the people stood gazing, and the rulers along with them mocked him, saying, He saved others, let him save himself, if he is the Christ, the elect of God. 36. The soldiers also mocked him, approaching, and offering him vinegar, 37. And saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. (*And a little after.*) 39. And one of the malefactors, who were executed, reviled him, saying, If thou art the Christ, save thyself and us. 40. And the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou at least fear God, since thou art in the same condemnation? 41. And we indeed justly; for we receive what is due to our actions, but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42. And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me, when thou shalt come into thy kingdom. 43. Jesus said to him, Verily, I say to thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Matthew XXVII. 39. *And they that passed by.* These circumstances carry great weight; for they place before us the extreme abasement of the Son of God, that we may see more clearly how much our salvation cost him, and that, reflecting that we justly deserved all the punishments which he endured, we may be more and more excited to repentance. For in this exhibition God hath plainly showed to us how wretched our condition would have been, if we had not a Redeemer. But all that Christ endured in himself ought to be applied for our consolation. This certainly was more cruel than all the other tortures, that they upbraided, and reviled, and tormented him as one that had been cast off and forsaken by God, (Isaiah liii. 4.) And, therefore, David, as the representative of Christ, complains chiefly of this among the distresses which he suffered, (Psalm xxii. 7.) And, indeed,

there is nothing that inflicts a more painful wound on pious minds than when ungodly men, in order to shake their faith, upbraid them with being deprived of the assistance and favour of God. This is the harsh persecution with which, Paul tells us, Isaac was tormented by Ishmael, (Gal. iv. 29;) not that he attacked him with the sword, and with outward violence, but that, by turning the grace of God into ridicule, he endeavoured to overthrow his faith. These temptations were endured, first by David, and afterwards by Christ himself, that they might not at the present day strike us with excessive alarm, as if they had been unusual; for there never will be wanting wicked men who are disposed to insult our distresses. And whenever God does not assist us according to our wish, but conceals his aid for a little time, it is a frequent stratagem of Satan, to allege that our hope was to no purpose, as if his promise had failed.

40. *Thou who destroyedst the temple.* They charge Christ with teaching falsehood, because, now that it is called for, he does not actually display the power to which he laid claim. But if their unbridled propensity to cursing had not deprived them of sense and reason, they would shortly afterwards have perceived clearly the truth of his statement. Christ had said, *Destroy this temple, and after three days I will raise it up*, (John ii. 19;) but now they indulge in a premature triumph, and do not wait for the *three days* that would elapse from the commencement of its destruction. Such is the daring presumption of wicked men, when, under the pretence of the cross, they endeavour to cut them off from the hope of the future life. "Where," say they, "is that immortal glory of which weak and credulous men are accustomed to boast? while the greater part of them are mean and despised, some are slenderly provided with food, others drag out a wretched life, amidst uninterrupted disease; others are driven about in flight, or in banishment; others pine away in prisons, and others are burnt and reduced to ashes?" Thus are they blinded by the present corruption of our outward man, so as to imagine that the hope of the future restoration of life is vain and foolish. But our duty is, to wait for the proper season of the promised building, and not to take it ill

if we are now *crucified with Christ*, that we may afterwards be partakers of *his resurrection*, (Rom. vi. 5, 6.)

If thou art the Son of God. Wicked men demand from Christ such a proof of his power that, by proving himself to be *the Son of God*, he may cease to be *the Son of God*. He had clothed himself with human flesh, and had descended into the world, on this condition, that, by the sacrifice of his death, he might reconcile men to God the Father. So then, in order to prove himself to be *the Son of God*, it was necessary that he should hang on the cross. And now those wicked men affirm that the Redeemer will not be recognised as the Son of God, unless he come down from the cross, and thus disobey the command of his Father, and, leaving incomplete the expiation of sins, divest himself of the office which God had assigned to him. But let us learn from it to confirm our faith by considering that the Son of God determined to remain nailed to the cross for the sake of our salvation, until he had endured most cruel torments of the flesh, and dreadful anguish of soul, and even death itself. And lest we should come to tempt God in a manner similar to that in which those men tempted him, let us allow God to conceal his power, whenever it pleases Him to do so, that he may afterwards display it at his pleasure at the proper time and place. The same kind of depravity appears in the other objection which immediately follows :—

42. *If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe him.* For they ought not to embrace as *King* any one who did not answer to the description given by the prophets. But Isaiah (lii. 14 ; liii. 2) and Zechariah (xiii. 7) expressly represent Christ as devoid of comeliness, afflicted, condemned, and accursed, half-dead, poor, and despised, before he ascends the royal throne. It is therefore foolish in the Jews to desire one of an opposite character, whom they may acknowledge as King ; for, by so doing, they declare that they have no good-will to the King whom the Lord had promised to give. But let us, on the contrary, that our faith may firmly rely on Christ, seek a foundation in his cross ; for in no other way

could he be acknowledged to be the lawful *King* of Israel than by fufilling what belonged to the Redeemer. And hence we conclude how dangerous it is to depart from the word of God by wandering after our speculations. For the Jews, in consequence of having imagined to themselves a *King* who had been suggested to them by their own senses, rejected Christ crucified, because they reckoned it absurd to believe in him; while we regard it as the best and highest reason for believing, that he voluntarily subjected himself on our account to the ignominy of the cross.

He saved others; himself he cannot save. It was an ingratitude which admits of no excuse, that, taking offence at the present humiliation of Christ, they utterly disregard all the miracles which he had formerly performed before their eyes. They acknowledge that *he saved others*. By what power, or by what means? Why do they not in this instance, at least, behold with reverence an evident work of God? But since they maliciously exclude, and—as far as lies in their power—endeavour to extinguish the light of God which shone in the miracles, they are unworthy of forming an accurate judgment of the weakness of the cross. Because Christ does not immediately deliver himself from death, they upbraid him with inability. And it is too customary with all wicked men to estimate the power of God by present appearances, so that whatever he does not accomplish they think that he cannot accomplish, and so they accuse him of weakness, whenever he does not comply with their wicked desire. But let us believe that Christ, though he might easily have done it, did not immediately deliver himself from death, but it was because he did not wish to deliver himself. And why did he for the time disregard his own safety, but because he cared more about the salvation of us all? We see then that the Jews, through their malice, employed, in defence of their unbelief, those things by which our faith is truly edified.

43. *He trusted in God.* This, as I said a little ago, is a very sharp arrow of temptation which Satan holds in his hand, when he pretends that God has forgotten us, because He does not relieve us speedily and at the very moment.

For since God watches over the safety of his people, and not only grants them seasonable aid, but even anticipates their necessities, (as Scripture everywhere teaches us,) he appears not to love those whom he does not assist. Satan, therefore, attempts to drive us to despair by this logic, that it is in vain for us to feel assured of the love of God, when we do not clearly perceive his aid. And as he suggests to our minds this kind of imposition, so he employs his agents, who contend that God has sold and abandoned our salvation, because he delays to give his assistance. We ought, therefore, to reject as false this argument, that God does not love those whom he appears for a time to forsake; and, indeed, nothing is more unreasonable than to limit his love to any point of time. God has, indeed, promised that he will be our Deliverer; but if he sometimes wink at our calamities, we ought patiently to endure the delay. It is, therefore, contrary to the nature of faith, that the word *now* should be insisted on by those whom God is training by the cross and by adversity to obedience, and whom he entreats to pray and to call on his name; for these are rather the testimonies of his fatherly love, as the apostle tells us, (Heb. xii. 6.) But there was this peculiarity in Christ, that, though he was the *well-beloved Son*, (Matth. iii. 17; xvii. 5,) yet he was not delivered from death, until he had endured the punishment which we deserved; because that was the price by which our salvation was purchased.[1] Hence it follows again that the priests act maliciously, when they infer that he is not the Son of God, because he performs the office which was enjoined upon him by the Father.

44. *And the robbers also.* Matthew and Mark, by synecdoche, attribute to the robbers what was done only by one of them, as is evident from Luke. And this mode of expression ought not to be accounted harsh; for the two Evangelists had no other design than to show that Christ was attacked on every hand by the reproaches of all men, so that even *the robbers*, who were fast dying, did not spare him. In

[1] "Pource que c'estoit le prix de nostre salut et redemption;"—"because it was the price of our salvation and redemption."

like manner David, deploring his calamities, exhibits their violence in a strong light by saying, that he is the reproach of all sorts of men, and despised by the people. Now although they leave out the memorable narrative which Luke relates as to the other *robber*, still there is no inconsistency in their statement, that Christ was despised by all, down to the very *robbers;* for they do not speak of particular individuals, but of the class itself. Let us now, therefore, come to what is stated by Luke.

Luke XXII. 39. *And one of the malefactors.* This reproach, which the Son of God endured from the *robber*, obtained for us among angels the very high honour of acknowledging us to be their brethren. But at the same time, an example of furious obstinacy is held out to us in this wretched man, since even in the midst of his torments he does not cease fiercely to foam out his blasphemies. Thus desperate men are wont to take obstinate revenge for the torments which they cannot avoid.[1] And although he upbraids Christ with not being able to save either himself or others, yet this objection is directed against God himself; just as wicked men, when they do not obtain what they wish, would willingly tear God from heaven. They ought, indeed, to be tamed to humility by strokes; but this shows that the wicked heart, which no punishments can bend, is hard like iron.

40. *And the other answering.* In this wicked man a striking mirror of the unexpected and incredible grace of God is held out to us, not only in his being suddenly changed into a new man, when he was near death, and drawn from hell itself to heaven, but likewise in having obtained in a moment the forgiveness of all the sins in which he had been plunged through his whole life, and in having been thus admitted to heaven before the apostles and first-fruits of the new Church. First, then, a remarkable instance of the grace of God

[1] "Voyans qu'ils ne peuvent eschapper les tormens, ils se vengent en s'obstinant et rongeant leur frein, comme on dit."—"Perceiving that they cannot escape torments, they take revenge by obstinacy, and by *champing the bit*, as the saying is."

shines in the conversion of that man. For it was not by the natural movement of the flesh that he laid aside his fierce cruelty and proud contempt of God, so as to repent immediately, but he was subdued by the hand of God; as the whole of Scripture shows that repentance is His work. And so much the more excellent is this grace, that it came beyond the expectation of all. For who would ever have thought that a *robber*, in the very article of death, would become not only a devout worshipper of God, but a distinguished teacher of faith and piety to the whole world, so that we too must receive from his mouth the rule of a true and proper confession? Now the first proof which he gave of his repentance was, that he severely reproved and restrained the wicked forwardness of his companion. He then added a second, by humbling himself in open acknowledgment of his crimes, and ascribing to Christ the praise due to his righteousness. Thirdly, he displayed astonishing faith by committing himself and his salvation to the protection of Christ, while he saw him hanging on the cross and near death.

Dost not thou fear God? Though these words are tortured in various ways by commentators, yet the natural meaning of them appears to me to be, What is the meaning of this, that even this *condemnation* does not compel thee to *fear God?* For the *robber* represents it as an additional proof of the hard-heartedness of his companion, that when reduced to the lowest straits, he does not even now begin to *fear God.* But to remove all ambiguity, it is proper to inform the reader that an impudent and detestable blasphemer, who thought that he might safely indulge in ridicule, is summoned to the judgment-seat of God; for though he had remained all his life unmoved, he ought to have trembled when he saw that the hand of God was armed against him, and that he must soon render an account of all his crimes. It was, therefore, a proof of desperate and diabolical obstinacy, that while God held him bound by the final judgment, he did not even then return to a sound mind; for if there had been the smallest particle of godliness in the heart of that man, he would at least have been constrained to yield to *the fear of God.* We now perceive the general meaning of his words, that those

men, in whom even punishments do not produce amendment, are desperate, and totally destitute of *the fear of God.*

I interpret the words ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κρίματι to mean not *in the same condemnation,* but *during the condemnation itself;*[1] as if the *robber* had said, Since thou art even now in the jaws of death, thou oughtest to be aroused to acknowledge God as thy Judge. Hence, too, we draw a useful doctrine, that those whom punishments do not train to humility do altogether resist God; for they who possess any *fear of God* must necessarily be overwhelmed with shame, and struck silent.

41. *And we indeed justly.* As the reproof founded on *the condemnation* might be thought to apply to Christ, the robber here draws a distinction between the condition of Christ and that of himself and his companion. For he acknowledges, that the punishment which was common to all the three was *justly* inflicted on him and his companion, but not on Christ, who had been dragged to the punishment of death, not by his own crime, but by the cruelty of enemies. But we ought to remember what I said a little ago, that the robber gave a proof of his repentance, such as God demands from all of us, when he acknowledged that he was now receiving the reward due to his actions. Above all, it ought to be observed, that the severity of the punishment did not hinder him from patiently submitting to dreadful tortures. And, therefore, if we truly repent of our crimes, let us learn to confess them willingly and without hypocrisy, whenever it is necessary, and not to refuse the disgrace which we have deserved. For the only method of burying our sins before God and before angels is, not to attempt to disguise them before men by vain excuses. Again, among the various coverings on which hypocrisy seizes, the most frequent of all is, that every one draws in others along with himself, that he may excuse himself by their example. The *robber,* on the other hand, is not less eager to maintain the innocence of Christ, than he is frank and open in condemning himself and his companion.

[1] "Je les pren pour la condamnation presente, et laquelle ne menace point de loin, mais tient desja la personne, et se fait sentir."—"I take them for the condemnation which is present, and which does not threaten at a distance, but already holds the person, and makes itself be felt."

42. *Lord, remember me.* I know not that, since the creation of the world, there ever was a more remarkable and striking example of faith; and so much the greater admiration is due to the grace of the Holy Spirit, of which it affords so magnificent a display. A *robber*, who not only had not been educated in the school of Christ, but, by giving himself up to execrable murders, had endeavoured to extinguish all sense of what was right, suddenly rises higher than all the apostles and the other disciples whom the Lord himself had taken so much pains to instruct; and not only so, but he adores Christ as a *King* while on the gallows, celebrates his *kingdom* in the midst of shocking and worse than revolting abasement, and declares him, when dying, to be the Author of life. Even though he had formerly possessed right faith, and heard many things about the office of Christ, and had even been confirmed in it by his miracles, still that knowledge might have been overpowered by the thick darkness of so disgraceful a death. But that a person, ignorant and uneducated, and whose mind was altogether corrupted, should all at once, on receiving his earliest instructions, perceive salvation and heavenly glory in the accursed cross, was truly astonishing. For what marks or ornaments of royalty did he see in Christ, so as to raise his mind to his kingdom? And, certainly, this was, as it were, from the depth of hell to rise above the heavens. To the flesh it must have appeared to be fabulous and absurd, to ascribe to one who was *rejected and despised*, (Isa. liii. 3,) whom the world could not endure, an earthly kingdom more exalted than all the empires of the world. Hence we infer how acute must have been the eyes of his mind, by which he beheld life in death, exaltation in ruin, glory in shame, victory in destruction, a *kingdom* in bondage.

Now if a *robber*, by his faith, elevated Christ—while hanging on the cross, and, as it were, overwhelmed with cursing—to a heavenly throne, woe to our sloth[1] if we do not behold him with reverence while sitting at the right hand of God; if we do not fix our hope of life on his resurrection; if

[1] "Maudite soit nostre lacheté;"—"accursed be our sloth."

our aim is not towards heaven where he has entered. Again, if we consider, on the other hand, the condition in which he was, when he implored the compassion of Christ, our admiration of his faith will be still heightened. With a mangled body, and almost dead, he is looking for the last stroke of the executioner, and yet he relies on the grace of Christ alone. First, whence came his assurance of pardon, but because in the death of Christ, which all others look upon as detestable, he beholds a sacrifice of sweet savour, efficacious for expiating the sins of the world?[1] And when he courageously disregards his tortures, and is even so forgetful of himself, that he is carried away to the hope and desire of the hidden life, this goes far beyond the human faculties. From this teacher, therefore, whom the Lord has appointed over us to humble the pride of the flesh, let us not be ashamed to learn the mortification of the flesh, and patience, and elevation of faith, and steadiness of hope, and ardour of piety; for the more eagerly any man follows him, so much the more nearly will he approach to Christ.

43. *Verily I tell thee.* Though Christ had not yet made a public triumph over death, still he displays the efficacy and fruit of his death in the midst of his humiliation. And in this way he shows that he never was deprived of the power of his kingdom; for nothing more lofty or magnificent belongs to a divine King[2] than to restore life to the dead. So then, Christ, although, struck by the hand of God, he appeared to be a man utterly abandoned, yet as he did not cease to be the Saviour of the world, he was always endued with heavenly power for fulfilling his office. And, first, we ought to observe his inconceivable readiness in so kindly receiving the robber without delay, and promising to make him a partaker[3] of a happy life. There is therefore no room to doubt that he is prepared to admit into his king-

[1] "Ayant ceste efficace de purger et nettoyer tous les pechez du monde;"—"having that efficacy to cleanse and wash away all the sins of the world."

[2] "Au Roy celeste;"—"to the heavenly King."

[3] "De le faire participant."

dom all, without exception, who shall apply to him. Hence we may conclude with certainty that we shall be saved, provided that he *remember us;* and it is impossible that he shall forget those who commit to him their salvation.

But if a robber found the entrance into heaven so easy, because, while he beheld on all sides ground for total despair, he relied on the grace of Christ; much more will Christ, who has now vanquished death, stretch out his hand to us from his throne, to admit us to be partakers of life. For since Christ has *nailed to his cross the handwriting which was opposed to us,* (Col. ii. 14,) and has destroyed death and Satan, and in his resurrection has triumphed over *the prince of the world,* (John xii. 31,) it would be unreasonable to suppose that the passage from death to life will be more laborious and difficult to us than to the robber. Whoever then in dying shall commit to Christ, in true faith, the keeping of his soul, will not be long detained or allowed to languish in suspense; but Christ will meet his prayer with the same kindness which he exercised towards *the robber.* Away, then, with that detestable contrivance of the Sophists about retaining the punishment when the guilt is removed; for we see how Christ, in acquitting him from condemnation, frees him also from punishment. Nor is this inconsistent with the fact, that the robber nevertheless endures to the very last the punishment which had been pronounced upon him; for we must not here imagine any compensation which serves the purpose of satisfaction for appeasing the judgment of God, (as the Sophists dream,) but the Lord merely trains his elect by corporal punishments to displeasure and hatred of sin. Thus, when the robber has been brought by fatherly discipline to self-denial, Christ receives him, as it were, into his bosom, and does not send him away to the fire of purgatory.

We ought likewise to observe by what keys the gate of heaven was opened to the robber; for neither papal confession nor satisfactions are here taken into account, but Christ is satisfied with repentance and faith, so as to receive him willingly when he comes to him. And this confirms more fully what I formerly suggested, that if any man disdain to

abide by the footsteps of the robber, and to follow in his path, he deserves everlasting destruction, because by wicked pride he shuts against himself the gate of heaven. And, certainly, as Christ has given to all of us, in the person of *the robber*, a general pledge of obtaining forgiveness, so, on the other hand, he has bestowed on this wretched man such distinguished honour, in order that, laying aside our own glory, we may glory in nothing but the mercy of God alone. If each of us shall truly and seriously examine the subject, we shall find abundant reason to be ashamed of the prodigious mass of our crimes, so that we shall not be offended at having for our guide and leader a poor wretch, who obtained salvation by free grace. Again, as the death of Christ at that time yielded its fruit, so we infer from it that souls, when they have departed from their bodies, continue to live; otherwise the promise of Christ, which he confirms even by an oath, would be a mockery.

To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. We ought not to enter into curious and subtle arguments about the place of paradise. Let us rest satisfied with knowing that those who are ingrafted by faith into the body of Christ are partakers of that life, and thus enjoy after death a blessed and joyful rest, until the perfect glory of the heavenly life is fully manifested by the coming of Christ.

One point still remains. What is promised to the robber does not alleviate his present sufferings, nor make any abatement of his bodily punishment. This reminds us that we ought not to judge of the grace of God by the perception of the flesh; for it will often happen that those to whom God is reconciled are permitted by him to be severely afflicted. So then, if we are dreadfully tormented in body, we ought to be on our guard lest the severity of pain hinder us from tasting the goodness of God; but, on the contrary, all our afflictions ought to be mitigated and soothed by this single consolation, that as soon as God has received us into his favour, all the afflictions which we endure are aids to our salvation. This will cause our faith not only to rise victorious over all our distresses, but to enjoy calm repose amidst the endurance of sufferings.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVII. 45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole land[1] till the ninth hour. 46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47. And some of those who were standing by, when they heard it, said, He calleth Elijah. 48. And immediately one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and fastened it to a reed, and gave him to drink. 49. But others said, Let him alone, let us see if Elijah will come to save him. 50. And Jesus having again cried with a loud voice, gave up his spirit. 51. And, lo, the vail of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth trembled, and the rocks were split, 52. And graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had slept arose, 53. And came out of their graves, after his resurrection, and came into the holy city, and appeared to many. 54. Now the centurion, and they who were with him guarding Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and those things which were done, were exceedingly terrified, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. 55. And there were there many women looking on at a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him: 56. Among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.	XV. 33. But when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over all the land[1] till the ninth hour. 34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* which is, when interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35. And some of those who were standing by, when they heard it, said, Lo, he calleth for Elijah. 36. And some one ran, and filled a sponge with vinegar, and fastened it to a reed, and held it out to him to drink, saying, Let him alone, let us see if Elijah will come to take him down. 37. And Jesus, having uttered a loud voice, expired. 38. And the vail of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. 39. And when the centurion, who was standing opposite to him, saw that he thus expired after crying aloud, he said, Certainly this man was the Son of God. 40. And there were also women looking on from a distance, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James the less and of Joses, and of Salome; 41. (Who also, when he was in Galilee, had followed him, and ministered to him,) and many others, who had also gone up with him to Jerusalem.	XXIII. 44. Now it was about the sixth hour; and there was darkness over all the land[2] till the ninth hour. 45. And the sun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midst. 46. And Jesus having cried with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he expired. 47. And when the centurion saw what happened, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. 48. And all the multitudes who were present at that spectacle, when they saw what was done, returned, smiting their breasts. 49. And all his acquaintances, and the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, beholding these things.

[1] "Sur tout le pays;"—"over the whole country."

[2] "Par toute la terre, *ou, tout le pays;*"—"through all the land, *or, through all the country.*"

Matthew XXVII. 45. *Now from the sixth hour.* Although in the death of Christ the weakness of the flesh concealed for a short time the glory of the Godhead, and though the Son of God himself was disfigured by shame and contempt, and, as Paul says, *was emptied,* (Philip. ii. 7;) yet the heavenly Father did not cease to distinguish him by some marks, and during his lowest humiliation prepared some indications of his future glory, in order to fortify the minds of the godly against the offence of the cross. Thus the majesty of Christ was attested by the *obscuration of the sun,* by the *earthquake,* by the *splitting* of the *rocks,* and the *rending* of *the vail,* as if heaven and earth were rendering the homage which they owed to their Creator.

But we inquire, in the first place, what was the design of the eclipse of *the sun?* For the fiction of the ancient poets in their tragedies, that the light of the sun is withdrawn from the earth whenever any shocking crime is perpetrated, was intended to express the alarming effects of the anger of God; and this invention unquestionably had its origin in the ordinary feelings of mankind. In accordance with this view, some commentators think that, at the death of Christ, God sent darkness as a mark of detestation, as if God, by bringing darkness over the sun, hid his face from beholding the blackest of all crimes. Others say that, when the visible sun was extinguished, it pointed out the death of *the Sun of righteousness.* Others choose to refer it to the blinding of the nation, which followed shortly afterwards. For the Jews, by rejecting Christ, as soon as he was removed from among them, were deprived of the light of heavenly doctrine, and nothing was left to them but the darkness of despair.

I rather think that, as stupidity had shut the eyes of that people against the light, the *darkness* was intended to arouse them to consider the astonishing design of God in the death of Christ. For if they were not altogether hardened, an unusual change of the order of nature must have made a deep impression on their senses, so as to look forward to an approaching renewal of the world. Yet it was a terrific spectacle which was exhibited to them, that they might tremble at the judgment of God. And, indeed, it was an astonishing dis-

play of the wrath of God that he did not spare even his only begotten Son, and was not appeased in any other way than by that price of expiation.

As to the scribes and priests, and a great part of the nation, who paid no attention to the eclipse of the sun, but passed it by with closed eyes, their amazing madness ought to strike us with horror;[1] for they must have been more stupid than brute beasts, who, when plainly warned of the severity of the judgment of heaven by such a miracle, did not cease to indulge in mockery. But this is the spirit of stupidity and of giddiness with which God intoxicates the reprobate, after having long contended with their malice. Meanwhile, let us learn that, when they were bewitched by the enchantments of Satan, the glory of God, however manifest, was afterwards hidden from them, or, at least, that their minds were darkened, so that, *seeing they did not see*, (Matth. xiii. 14.) But as it was a general admonition, it ought also to be of advantage to us, by informing us that the sacrifice by which we are redeemed was of as much importance as if the sun had fallen from heaven, or if the whole fabric of the world had fallen to pieces; for this will excite in us deeper horror at our sins.

As to the opinion entertained by some, who make this eclipse of the sun extend to every quarter of the world, I do not consider it to be probable. For though it was related by one or two authors, still the history of those times attracted so much attention, that it was impossible for so remarkable a miracle to be passed over in silence by many other authors, who have described minutely events which were not so worthy of being recorded. Besides, if the eclipse had been universal throughout the world, it would have been regarded as natural, and would more easily have escaped the notice of men.[2] But when the sun was shining

[1] "Leur forcenerie nous doit bien estonner, et nous faire dresser les cheveux en la teste;"—"their madness ought greatly to astonish us, and to make our hair stand on end."

[2] "Plus aisément on l'eust laissé passer sans enquerir la signification;"—"it would more easily have been allowed to pass without inquiring into its meaning."

elsewhere, it was a more striking miracle that Judea was covered with *darkness*.

46. *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried.* Though in the *cry* which Christ uttered a power more than human was manifested, yet it was unquestionably drawn from him by intensity of sorrow. And certainly this was his chief conflict, and harder than all the other tortures, that in his anguish he was so far from being soothed by the assistance or favour of his Father, that he felt himself to be in some measure estranged from him. For not only did he offer his body as the price of our reconciliation with God, but in his soul also he endured the punishments due to us; and thus he became, as Isaiah speaks, *a man of sorrows*, (liii. 3.) Those interpreters are widely mistaken who, laying aside this part of redemption, attended solely to the outward punishment of the flesh; for in order that Christ might satisfy for us,[1] it was necessary that he should be placed as a guilty person at the judgment-seat of God. Now nothing is more dreadful than to feel that God, whose wrath is worse than all deaths, is the Judge. When this temptation was presented to Christ, as if, having God opposed to him, he were already devoted to destruction, he was seized with horror, which would have been sufficient to swallow up a hundred times all the men in the world; but by the amazing power of the Spirit he achieved the victory. Nor is it by hypocrisy, or by assuming a character, that he complains of having been *forsaken by the Father*. Some allege that he employed this language in compliance with the opinion of the people, but this is an absurd mode of evading the difficulty; for the inward sadness of his soul was so powerful and violent, that it forced him to break out into a *cry*. Nor did the redemption which he accomplished consist solely in what was exhibited to the eye, (as I stated a little ago,) but having undertaken to be our surety, he resolved actually to undergo in our room the judgment of God.

But it appears absurd to say that an expression of despair escaped Christ. The reply is easy. Though the perception

[1] "A fin que Christ fist la satisfaction et le payment pour nous;"—"in order that Christ might make satisfaction and payment for us."

of the flesh would have led him to dread destruction, still in his heart faith remained firm, by which he beheld the presence of God, of whose absence he complains. We have explained elsewhere how the Divine nature gave way to the weakness of the flesh, so far as was necessary for our salvation, that Christ might accomplish all that was required of the Redeemer. We have likewise pointed out the distinction between the sentiment of nature and the knowledge of faith; and, therefore, the perception of God's estrangement from him, which Christ had, as suggested by natural feeling, did not hinder him from continuing to be assured by faith that God was reconciled to him. This is sufficiently evident from the two clauses of the complaint; for, before stating the temptation, he begins by saying that he betakes himself to God as *his God*, and thus by the shield of faith he courageously expels that appearance of *forsaking* which presented itself on the other side. In short, during this fearful torture his faith remained uninjured, so that, while he complained of being forsaken, he still relied on the aid of God as at hand.

That this expression eminently deserves our attention is evident from the circumstance, that the Holy Spirit, in order to engrave it more deeply on the memory of men, has chosen to relate it in the Syriac language;[1] for this has the same effect as if he made us hear Christ himself repeating the very words which then proceeded from his mouth. So much the more detestable is the indifference of those who lightly pass by, as a matter of jesting, the deep sadness and fearful trembling which Christ endured. No one who considers that Christ undertook the office of Mediator on the condition of suffering our condemnation, both in his body and in his soul, will think it strange that he maintained a struggle with the sorrows of death, as if an offended God had thrown him into a whirlpool of afflictions.

47. *He calleth Elijah.* Those who consider this as spoken

[1] "A voulu qu'il fust escrit et enregistré en langue Syrienne, de la quelle on usoit lors communément au pays;"—"determined that it should be written and recorded in the Syrian language, which was then commonly used in the country."

by the soldiers, ignorant and unskilled in the Syriac language, and unacquainted with the Jewish religion, and who imagine that the soldiers blundered through a resemblance of the words, are, in my opinion, mistaken. I do not think it at all probable that they erred through ignorance, but rather that they deliberately intended to mock Christ, and to turn his prayer into an occasion of slander. For Satan has no method more effectual for ruining the salvation of the godly, than by dissuading them from calling on God. For this reason, he employs his agents to drive off from us, as far as he can, the desire to pray. Thus he impelled the wicked enemies of Christ basely to turn his prayer into derision, intending by this stratagem to strip him of his chief armour. And certainly it is a very grievous temptation, when prayer appears to be so far from yielding any advantage to us, that God exposes his name to reproaches, instead of lending a gracious ear to our prayers. This ironical language, therefore—or rather this barking of dogs—amounts to saying that Christ has no access to God, because, by imploring *Elijah*, he seeks relief in another quarter. Thus we see that he was tortured on every hand, in order that, overwhelmed with despair, he might abstain from calling on God, which was, to abandon salvation. But if the hired brawlers of Antichrist, as well as wicked men existing in the Church, are now found to pervert basely by their calumnies what has been properly said by us, let us not wonder that the same thing should happen to our Head. Yet though they may change *God* into *Elijah*, when they have ridiculed us to their heart's content, God will at length listen to our groanings, and will show that he vindicates his glory, and punishes base falsehood.

48. *And immediately one ran.* As Christ had once refused to drink, it may be conjectured with probability, that it was repeatedly offered to him for the sake of annoyance; though it is also not improbable that *the vinegar* was held out to him in a cup before he was raised aloft, and that *a sponge* was afterwards applied to his mouth, while he was hanging on the cross.

Mark XV. 36. *Saying, Let him alone, let us see if Elijah*

will come to save him. Mark relates these words as having been spoken by the soldier, while holding out the vinegar; but Matthew tells us that others used the same language. There is no inconsistency here, however; for it is probable that the jeering was begun by one person, but was eagerly seized by others, and loudly uttered by the multitude. The phrase, *let him alone*, appears to have implied not restraint, but ridicule; accordingly, the person who first mocked Christ, ironically addressing his companions, says, *Let us see if Elijah will come.* Others quickly followed, and every one sung the same song to his next neighbour, as usually happens with men who are agreed about any course. Nor is it of any importance to inquire if it was in the singular or plural number; for in either case the meaning is the same, the word being used in place of an interjection, as if they had said, *Hush! Hush!*

Matthew XXVII. 50. *Jesus having again cried with a loud voice.* Luke, who makes no mention of the former complaint, repeats the words of this second *cry*, which Matthew and Mark leave out. He says that Jesus cried, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit;* by which he declared that, though he was fiercely attacked by violent temptations, still his faith was unshaken, and always kept its ground unvanquished. For there could not have been a more splendid triumph than when Christ boldly expresses his assurance that God is the faithful guardian of his soul, which all imagined to be lost. But instead of speaking to the deaf, he betook himself directly to God, and committed to his bosom the assurance of his confidence. He wished, indeed, that men should hear what he said; but though it might be of no avail to men, he was satisfied with having God alone as his witness. And certainly there is not a stronger or more decided testimony of faith than when a pious man—perceiving himself attacked on every hand, so that he finds no consolation on the part of men—despises the madness of the whole world, discharges his sorrows and cares into the bosom of God, and rests in the hope of his promises.

Though this form of prayer appears to be borrowed from

Psalm xxxi. 5, yet I have no doubt that he applied it to his immediate object, according to present circumstances; as if he had said, "I see, indeed, O Father, that by the universal voice I am destined to destruction, and that *my soul* is, so to speak, hurried to and fro; but though, according to the flesh, I perceive no assistance in thee, yet this will not hinder me from committing my spirit into thy hands, and calmly relying on the hidden safeguard of thy goodness." Yet it ought to be observed, that David, in the passage which I have quoted, not only prayed that his soul, received by the hand of God, might continue to be safe and happy after death, but committed his life to the Lord, that, guarded by his protection, he might prosper both in life and in death. He saw himself continually besieged by many deaths; nothing, therefore, remained but to commit himself to the invincible protection of God. Having made God the guardian of his soul, he rejoices that it is safe from all danger; and, at the same time, prepares to meet death with confidence, whenever it shall please God, because the Lord guards the souls of his people even in death. Now, as the former was taken away from Christ, to commit his soul to be protected by the Father during the frail condition of the earthly life, he hastens cheerfully to death, and desires to be preserved beyond the world; for the chief reason why God receives our souls into his keeping is, that our faith may rise beyond this transitory life.

Let us now remember that it was not in reference to himself alone that Christ committed his soul to the Father, but that he included, as it were, in one bundle all the souls of those who believe in him, that they may be preserved along with his own; and not only so, but by this prayer he obtained authority to save all souls, so that not only does the heavenly Father, for his sake, deign to take them into his custody, but, giving up the authority into his hands, commits them to him to be protected. And therefore Stephen also, when dying, resigns his soul into his hands, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, (Acts vii. 59.) Every one who, when he comes to die, following this example, shall believe in Christ, will not breathe his soul at random into the air, but will resort to a faithful guardian, who keeps in safety whatever has been delivered to him by the Father.

The *cry* shows also the intensity of the feeling; for there can be no doubt that Christ, out of the sharpness of the temptations by which he was beset, not without a painful and strenuous effort, broke out into this *cry*. And yet he likewise intended, by this loud and piercing exclamation, to assure us that his soul would be safe and uninjured by death, in order that we, supported by the same confidence, may cheerfully depart from the frail hovel of our flesh.

51. *And, lo, the vail of the temple was rent.* When Luke blends *the rending of the vail* with the eclipse of the sun, he inverts the order; for the Evangelists, as we have frequently seen, are not careful to mark every hour with exactness. Nor was it proper that the *vail* should be *rent*, until the sacrifice of expiation had been completed; for then Christ, the true and everlasting Priest, having abolished the figures of the law, opened up for us by his blood the way to the heavenly sanctuary, that we may no longer stand at a distance within the porch, but may freely advance into the presence of God. For so long as the shadowy worship lasted,[1] a *vail* was hung up before the earthly sanctuary, in order to keep the people not only from entering but from seeing it, (Exod. xxvi. 33; 2 Chron. iii. 14.) Now Christ, by *blotting out the handwriting which was opposed to us*, (Col. ii. 14,) removed every obstruction, that, relying on him as Mediator, we may all be *a royal priesthood*, (1 Pet. ii. 9.) Thus the *rending* of the *vail* was not only an abrogation of the ceremonies which existed under the law, but was, in some respects, an opening of heaven, that God may now invite the members of his Son to approach him with familiarity.

Meanwhile, the Jews were informed that the period of abolishing outward sacrifices had arrived, and that the ancient priesthood would be of no farther use; that though the building of the temple was left standing, it would not be necessary to worship God there after the ancient custom; but that since the substance and truth of the shadows had been fulfilled, the figures of the law were changed into spirit.

[1] "Cependant que le service, qui avoit les ombres de la Loy, a duré;"—"so long as the service, which contained the shadows of the Law, lasted."

For though Christ offered a visible sacrifice, yet, as the Apostle tells us, (Heb. ix. 14,) it must be viewed spiritually, that we may enjoy its value and its fruit. But it was of no advantage to those wretched men that the outward sanctuary was laid bare by *the rending of the vail*, because the inward *vail* of unbelief, which was in their hearts,[1] hindered them from beholding the saving light.

And the earth trembled, and the rocks were split. What Matthew adds about the earthquake and the *splitting of the rocks*, I think it probable, took place at the same time. In this way not only did the earth bear the testimony to its Creator, but it was even called as a witness against the hard-heartedness of a perverse nation; for it showed how monstrous that obstinacy must have been on which neither the *earthquake* nor *the splitting of the rocks* made any impression.

52. *And graves were opened.* This was also a striking miracle, by which God declared that his Son entered into the prison of death, not to continue to be shut up there, but to bring out all who were held captive. For at the very time when the despicable weakness of the flesh was beheld in the person of Christ, the magnificent and divine energy of his death penetrated even to hell. This is the reason why, when he was about to be shut up in a sepulchre, other sepulchres *were opened* by him. Yet it is doubtful if this *opening of the graves* took place before his resurrection; for, in my opinion, *the resurrection of the saints*, which is mentioned immediately afterwards, was subsequent to the resurrection of Christ. There is no probability in the conjecture of some commentators that, after having received life and breath, they remained three days concealed in their graves. I think it more probable that, when Christ died, the *graves* were immediately *opened*, and that, when he rose, some of the godly, having received life, *went out of their graves, and were seen* in the city. For Christ is called *the first-born from the dead*, (Col. i. 18,) and *the first-fruits of those who rise*, (1 Cor. xv. 20,) because by his death he commenced, and by his resurrection

[1] "Qui estoit en leurs cœurs."

he completed, a new life; not that, when he died, the dead were immediately raised, but because his death was the source and commencement of life. This reason, therefore, is fully applicable, since the opening of the graves was the presage of a new life, that the fruit or result appeared three days afterwards, because Christ, in rising from the dead, brought others along with him out of their graves as his companions. Now by this sign it was made evident, that he neither died nor rose again in a private capacity, but in order to shed the odour of life on all believers.

But here a question arises. Why did God determine that only some should arise, since a participation in the resurrection of Christ belongs equally to all believers? I reply: As the time was not fully come when the whole body of the Church should be gathered to its Head, he exhibited in a few persons an instance of the new life which all ought to expect. For we know that Christ was received into heaven on the condition that the *life* of his members should still *be hid*, (Col. iii. 3,) until it should be manifested by his coming. But in order that the minds of believers might be more quickly raised to hope, it was advantageous that the resurrection, which was to be common to all of them, should be tasted by a few.

Another and more difficult question is, What became of those saints afterwards? For it would appear to be absurd to suppose that, after having been once admitted by Christ to the participation of a new life, they again returned to dust. But as this question cannot be easily or quickly answered, so it is not necessary to give ourselves much uneasiness about a matter which is not necessary to be known. That they continued long to converse with men is not probable; for it was only necessary that they should be *seen* for a short time, that in them, as in a mirror or resemblance, the power of Christ might plainly appear. As God intended, by their persons, to confirm the hope of the heavenly life among those who were then alive, there would be no absurdity in saying that, after having performed this office, they again rested in their graves. But it is more probable that the life which they received was not afterwards taken from them; for if it

had been a mortal life, it would not have been a proof of a perfect resurrection. Now, though the whole world will rise again, and though Christ will raise up the wicked to judgment, as well as believers to salvation, yet as it was especially for the benefit of his Church that he rose again, so it was proper that he should bestow on none but *saints* the distinguished honour of rising along with him.

53. *And went into the holy city.* When Matthew bestows on Jerusalem the honourable designation of *the holy city*, he does not intend to applaud the character of its inhabitants; for we know that it was at that time full of all pollution and wickedness, so that it was rather *a den of robbers*, (Jer. vii. 11.) But as it had been chosen by God, its *holiness*, which was founded on God's adoption, could not be effaced by any corruptions of men, till its rejection was openly declared. Or, to express it more briefly, on the part of man it was profane, and on the part of God it was *holy*, till the destruction or pollution of the temple, which happened not long after the crucifixion of Christ.

54. *Now the centurion.* As Luke mentions the *lamentation* of the people, *the centurion* and his soldiers were not the only persons who acknowledged Christ to be *the Son of God;* but the Evangelists mention this circumstance respecting him for the purpose of heightening their description: for it is wonderful that an irreligious man, who had not been instructed in the Law, and was ignorant of true religion, should form so correct a judgment from the signs which he beheld. This comparison tends powerfully to condemn the stupidity of the city; for it was an evidence of shocking madness, that when the fabric of the world *shook and trembled*, none of the Jews were affected by it except the despised rabble. And yet, amidst such gross blindness, God did not permit the testimonies which he gave respecting his Son to be buried in silence. Not only, therefore, did true religion open the eyes of devout worshippers of God to perceive that from heaven God was magnifying the glory of Christ, but natural understanding compelled foreigners, and even sol-

diers, to confess what they had not learned either from the law or from any instructor.

When Mark says that *the centurion* spoke thus, because Christ, *when he had uttered a loud voice, expired*, some commentators think that he intends to point out the unwonted strength which remained unimpaired till death; and certainly, as the body of Christ was almost exhausted of blood, it could not happen, in the ordinary course of things, that the sides and the lungs should retain sufficient vigour for uttering so loud a cry. Yet I rather think that *the centurion* intended to applaud the unshaken perseverance of Christ in calling on the name of God. Nor was it merely the *cry* of Christ that led *the centurion* to think so highly of him, but this confession was extorted from him by perceiving that his extraordinary strength harmonized with heavenly miracles.

The words, *he feared God*,[1] must not be so explained as if he had fully repented.[2] It was only a sudden and transitory impulse, as it frequently happens, that men who are thoughtless and devoted to the world are struck with the fear of God, when he makes an alarming display of his power; but as they have no living root, indifference quickly follows, and puts an end to that feeling. *The centurion* had not undergone such a change as to dedicate himself to God for the remainder of his life, but was only for a moment the herald of the divinity of Christ.

When Luke represents him as saying no more than *certainly this was a righteous man*, the meaning is the same as if he had plainly said that he was *the Son of God*, as it is expressed by the other two Evangelists. For it had been universally reported that Christ was put to death, because he declared himself to be the Son of God. Now when *the centurion* bestows on him the praise of *righteousness*, and pronounces him to be innocent, he likewise acknowledges

[1] "Quand il est dit *qu'il craignit Dieu*;"—"when it is said *that he feared God*." CALVIN does not quote in this instance the exact words of Scripture. Of *the centurion and those who were with him*, Matthew says, (ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα,) *they were greatly terrified*; and of *the centurion* Luke says, (ἐδόξασε τὸν Θεόν,) *he glorified God*.—*Ed.*

[2] "Il ne faut pas entendre qu'il ait esté entierement converti;"—"we must not understand them to mean that he was fully converted."

him to be *the Son of God;* not that he understood distinctly how Christ was begotten by God the Father, but because he entertains no doubt that there is some divinity in him, and, convinced by proofs, holds it to be certain that Christ was not an ordinary man, but had been raised up by God.

As to *the multitudes*, by *striking their breasts*, they expressed the dread of punishment for a public crime, because they felt that public guilt had been contracted by an unjust and shocking murder.[1] But as they went no farther, their lamentation was of no avail; unless, perhaps, in some persons it was the commencement or preparation of true repentance. And since nothing more is described to us than the lamentation which God drew from them to the glory of his Son, let us learn by this example, that it is of little importance, or of no importance at all, if a man is struck with terror, when he sees before his eyes the power of God, until, after the astonishment has been abated, the fear of God remains calmly in his heart.

55. *And there were also many women there.* I consider this to have been added in order to inform us that, while the disciples had fled and were scattered in every direction, still some of their company were retained by the Lord as witnesses. Now though the Apostle John did not depart from the cross, yet no mention is made of him; but praise is bestowed on *the women* alone, who accompanied Christ till death, because their extraordinary attachment to their Master was the more strikingly displayed, when the men fled trembling. For they must have been endued with extraordinary strength of attachment, since, though they could render him no service, they did not cease to treat him with reverence, even when exposed to the lowest disgrace. And yet we learn from Luke that all the men had not fled; for he says that *all his acquaintances stood at a distance.* But not

[1] "Elles ont lamenté, craignans que malheur n'adveint sur tout le pays pour punition de ce qu'ils avoyent tous consenti à la condamnation et mort inique de Christ."—"They lamented, fearing that something unhappy would befall their country, as a punishment for their having all consented to the condemnation and unjust death of Christ."

without reason do the Evangelists bestow the chief praise on *the women*, for they deserved the preference above the men. In my opinion, the implied contrast suggests a severe reproof of the apostles. I speak of the great body of them; for since only one remained, the three Evangelists, as I mentioned a little ago, take no notice of him. It was in the highest degree disgraceful to chosen witnesses to withdraw from that spectacle on which depended the salvation of the world. Accordingly, when they afterwards proclaimed the gospel, they must have borrowed from *women* the chief portion of the history. But if a remedy had not been miraculously prepared by Providence against a great evil, they would have deprived themselves, and us along with them, of the knowledge of redemption.

At first sight, we might think that the testimony of *the women* does not possess equal authority; but if we duly consider by what power of the Spirit they were supported against that temptation, we shall find that there is no reason why our faith should waver, since it rests on God, who is the real Author of their testimony.[1] Yet let us observe, that it proceeded from the inconceivable goodness of God, that even to us should come that gospel which speaks of the expiation by which God has been reconciled to us. For during the general desertion of those who ought to have run before others, God encouraged some, out of the midst of the flock, who, recovering from the alarm, should be witnesses to us of that history, without the belief of which we cannot be saved. Of *the women* themselves, we shall presently have another opportunity of saying something. At present, it may be sufficient to take a passing notice of one point, that their eagerness for instruction led them to withdraw from their country, and constantly to learn from the lips of Christ, and that they spared neither toil nor money, provided that they might enjoy his saving doctrine.

1 "Qui est à la verité l'Autheur de ce tesmoignage des femmes;"—"who is in reality the Author of this testimony of the women."

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVII. 57. And when the evening was come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself was a disciple of Jesus. 58. He went to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus; then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59. And Joseph, having received the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and having rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, he departed. 61. And Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite to the sepulchre.	XV. 42. And when it was now evening, (because it was the preparation,[1] which goes before the Sabbath,) 43. Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, who was also himself waiting for the kingdom of God, came, and boldly went in to Pilate, and asked the body of Jesus. 44. And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and having called to him the centurion, he asked him if he had been long dead. 45. And having ascertained it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46. And he, having brought a linen cloth, took him down (*from the cross*,[2]) and wrapped him in the linen cloth, and laid him in the tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and rolled a stone to the door of the tomb. 47. And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, saw where he was laid.	XXIII. 50. And, lo, a man named Joseph, a counsellor, a good and righteous man, 51. Who had not consented to their decision, and to their deed; a native of Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. 52. He came to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus. 53. And he took him down, and wrapped him in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock, in which no man had ever been laid. 54. And it was the day of the preparation, and the Sabbath was approaching. 55. And the women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how the body was laid. 56. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.

The burial of Christ is now added, as an intermediate transition from the ignominy of the cross to the glory of the resurrection. True, indeed, God determined, for another reason, that Christ should be buried, that it might be more fully attested that he suffered real death on our account. But yet it ought to be regarded as the principal design, that in this manner the cursing, which he had endured for a short time, began to be removed; for his body was not thrown into a ditch in the ordinary way, but honourably laid in a *hewn sepulchre*. Although at that time the weakness of the flesh was still visible, and the divine power of the Spirit was

[1] "Le jour de la preparation;"—"the day of the preparation."
[2] "De la croix."

not clearly seen before his resurrection; yet God determined by this, as a sort of preparation, to shadow out what he was shortly afterwards to do, that he might exalt gloriously above the heavens his Son, the conqueror of death.

Matthew XXVII. 57. *And when the evening was come.* Let it be understood that *Joseph* did not come in the dusk of *the evening*, but before sunset, that he might perform this office of kindness to his Master, without violating *the sabbath;* for the *sabbath* commenced in the evening, and therefore it was necessary that Christ should be laid in the grave before night came on. Now from the time that Christ died until *the sabbath* began to be observed, there were three free days. And though John dŏes not mention *Joseph* only, but joins *Nicodemus* as his companion, (xix. 39;) yet as he alone undertook the business at first, and as *Nicodemus* did no more than follow and join him, the three Evangelists satisfied themselves with relating in a brief narrative what was done by Joseph alone.

Now though this affection of *Joseph* deserved uncommon praise, still we ought first to consider the providence of God, in subduing a man of high and honourable rank among his countrymen, to wipe away the reproach of the cross by the honour of burial. And, indeed, as he exposed himself to the dislike and hatred of the whole nation, and to great dangers, there can be no doubt that this singular courage arose from a secret movement of the Spirit; for though he had formerly been one of Christ's *disciples*, yet he had never ventured to make a frank and open profession of his faith. When the death of Christ now presents to him a spectacle full of despair, and fitted to break the strongest minds, how comes he suddenly to acquire such noble courage that, amidst the greatest terrors, he feels no dread, and hesitates not to advance farther than he had ever done, when all was in peace? Let us know then that, when the Son of God was buried by the hand of Joseph, it was the work of God.

To the same purpose must also be referred the circumstances which are here detailed. *Joseph's* piety and integrity of life are commended, that in the servant of God we may learn to recognise the work of God. The Evangelists relate

that he was *rich*, in order to inform us that his amazing magnanimity of mind enabled him to rise superior to the obstruction which would otherwise have compelled him to retire. For *rich men*, being naturally proud, find nothing more difficult than to expose themselves voluntarily to the contempt of the people. Now we know how mean and disgraceful an act it was to receive from the hand of the executioner the body of a crucified man. Besides, as men devoted to riches are wont to avoid everything fitted to excite prejudice, the more eminent he was for wealth, the more cautious and timid he would have been, unless a holy boldness[1] had been imparted to him from heaven. The dignity of his rank is likewise mentioned, that he was a *counsellor*, or *senator*, that in this respect also the power of God may be displayed; for it was not one of the lowest of the people that was employed to bury the body of Christ in haste and in concealment, but from a high rank of honour he was raised up to discharge this office. For the less credible it was that such an office of kindness should be performed towards Christ, the more clearly did it appear that the whole of this transaction was regulated by the purpose and hand of God.

We are taught by this example, that the rich are so far from being excusable, when they deprive Christ of the honour due to him, that they must be held to be doubly criminal, for turning into obstructions those circumstances which ought to have been excitements to activity. It is too frequent and customary, I acknowledge, for those who think themselves superior to others, to withdraw from the yoke, and to become soft and effeminate through excessive timidity and solicitude about their affairs. But we ought to view it in a totally different light; for if riches and honours do not aid us in the worship of God, we utterly abuse them. The present occurrence shows how easy it is for God to correct wicked fears by hindering us from doing our duty; since formerly *Joseph* did not venture to make an open profession of being a disciple of Christ, when matters were doubtful, but now, when the rage of enemies is at its height, and when their cruelty

[1] "Une saincte hardiesse."

abounds, he gathers courage, and does not hesitate to incur manifest danger. We see then how the Lord in a moment forms the hearts to new feelings, and raises up by a spirit of fortitude those who had previously fainted. But if, through a holy desire to honour Christ, Joseph assumed such courage, while Christ was hanging on the cross, woe to our slothfulness,[1] if, now that he has risen from the dead, an equal zeal, at least, to glorify him do not burn in our hearts.

Mark XV. 43, and Luke XXIII. 51. *Who also himself was waiting for the kingdom of God.* The highest commendation bestowed on *Joseph* is, that *he waited for the kingdom of God.* He is likewise praised, no doubt, for *righteousness,* but this *waiting for the kingdom of God* was the root and source of his *righteousness.* By *the kingdom of God,* we must understand the renovation promised through Christ; for the perfection of order which, the prophets had every where promised, would exist at the coming of Christ, cannot exist, unless God assembles under his government those men who had gone astray. It is therefore pointed out in commendation of Joseph's piety, that, during the disorder which then prevailed, he cherished the hope of that redemption which God had promised. Hence, too, arises the fear of God, and the desire of holiness and uprightness; for it is impossible for any one to dedicate himself to God, unless he expects that God will be his deliverer.

Yet let us observe, that while salvation through Christ was promised indiscriminately to all the Jews, and while the promise of it was common to them all, it is only of a very few that the Holy Spirit testifies what we are here told of Joseph. Hence it is evident, that nearly the whole of the people had buried in base forgetfulness the inestimable grace of God. All of them, indeed, had on their lips the language of boasting in reference to the coming of Christ, which was approaching; but few had the covenant of God fixed in their minds, so as to rise by faith to spiritual renovation. That was indeed an awful insensibility; and therefore we need not

[1] "Mandite soit nostre lascheté;"—"accursed be our sloth."

wonder if pure religion fell into decay, when the faith of salvation was extinguished. Would to God that a similar corruption did not prevail in this unhappy age! Christ once appeared as a Redeemer to the Jews and to the whole world, as had been declared in the predictions of the prophets. He set up *the kingdom of God*, by restoring affairs from confusion and disorder to a regular and proper condition. He has assigned to us a period of warfare, to exercise our patience till he come again from heaven to complete his reign which he has commenced. How many are there who aspire to this hope, even in a moderate degree? Do not almost all cleave to the earth, as if there had been no promise of a resurrection? But while the greater part of men, forgetful of their end, fall off on all sides, let us remember that it is a virtue peculiar to believers, to *seek the things which are above*, (Col. iii. 1;) and especially since the grace of God has shone upon us through the Gospel, *teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, justly, and piously, in the present world, looking for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of the great God*, (Titus ii. 11–13.)

Matthew XXVII. 59. *And having taken the body.* The three Evangelists glance briefly at the burial; and therefore they say nothing about the aromatic ointments which John alone mentions, (xix. 39;) only they relate that *Joseph purchased a clean linen cloth;* from which we infer, that Christ was honourably buried. And, indeed, there could be no doubt that *a rich man*, when he gave up his *sepulchre* to our Lord, made provision also, in other respects, for suitable magnificence and splendour. And this, too, was brought about by the secret providence of God, rather than by the premeditated design of men, that a new sepulchre, *in which no man had ever yet been laid*, was obtained by our Lord, who is *the first-born from the dead*, (Col. i. 18,) and *the first-fruits of them that rise*, (1 Cor. xv. 20.) God intended, therefore, by this mark to distinguish his Son from the remainder of the human race, and to point out by the *sepulchre* itself his newness of life.

61. *And Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, were there.* Matthew and Mark relate only that *the women looked at what was done, and marked the place where the body was laid.* But Luke states, at the same time, their resolution, which was, that *they returned* to the city, *and prepared spices and ointments,* that two days afterwards they might render due honour to the burial. Hence we learn that their minds were filled with a better odour, which the Lord breathed into his death, that he might bring them to his grave, and exalt them higher.

Matthew.

XXVII. 62. And the next day, which is after the preparation,[1] the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate, 63. Saying, Sir, we remember that that impostor said, while he was still alive, After three days I shall rise again. 64. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made secure till the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come by night to steal him, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first. 65. Pilate saith to them, You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you can. 66. And they went and made the sepulchre secure, sealing the stone, and posting guards.

Matthew XXVII. 62. *And the next day.* In this narrative Matthew did not so much intend to show with what determined rage the scribes and priests pursued Christ, as to exhibit to us, as in a mirror, the amazing providence of God in proving the resurrection of his Son. Cunning men, practised at least in fraud and treachery, plot among themselves, and contrive a method by which they may extinguish the memory of a dead man; for they see that they have gained nothing, if they do not destroy the certainty of the resurrection. But while they are attempting to do this, they appear rather as if they had expressly intended to bring it forth to the light, that it might be known. The resurrection of Christ would undoubtedly have been less manifest, or, at least, they would have had more plausible grounds for denying it, if they had not taken pains to station witnesses at the sepulchre. We see then how the Lord not only *disappointeth the crafty,* (Job v. 12,) but employs even their own schemes as snares

[1] "*Qui est apres la preparation* du Sabbath;"—"*which is after the preparation* of the Sabbath."

for holding them fast, that he may draw and compel them to render obedience to him. The enemies of Christ were indeed unworthy of having his resurrection made known to them; but it was proper that their insolence should be exposed, and every occasion of slander taken away from them, and that even their consciences should be convinced, so that they might not be held excusable for ignorance. Yet let us observe that God, as if he had hired them for the purpose, employed their services for rendering the glory of Christ more illustrious; because no plausible ground for lying, in order to deny it, was left to them when they found the grave empty; not that they desisted from their wicked rage, but with all persons of correct and sober judgment it was a sufficient testimony that Christ was risen, since his body, which had been placed in a grave, and protected by guards who surrounded it on all sides, was not to be found.

63. *We remember that that impostor said.* This thought was suggested to them by divine inspiration, not only that the Lord might execute upon them just vengeance for their wickedness, (as he always punishes bad consciences by secret torments,) but chiefly in order to restrain their unholy tongues. Yet we again perceive what insensibility seizes on wicked men, when they are bewitched by Satan. They go so far as to call him an *impostor*, whose divine power and glory were lately manifested by so many miracles. This certainly was not to defy the clouds, but to spit in the face of God, so to speak, by ridiculing the brightness of the sun. Such examples show us that we ought, with pious and modest thoughtfulness, to direct our attention early to the glory of God when it is presented to our view, that our hardness of heart may not lead us to brutal and dreadful blindness. Now though it may appear strange and absurd for wicked men to indulge in such wicked mockery over Christ when dead, that our minds may not be rendered uneasy by this licentiousness, we ought always to consider wisely the purpose to which the Lord turns it. Wicked men imagine that they will overwhelm the whole of the doctrine of Christ, together with his miracles, by that single blasphemy, which

they haughtily vomit out; but God employs no other persons than themselves for vindicating his Son from all blame of *imposture*. Whenever these wicked men shall labour to overturn everything by their calumnies, and shall launch out into unmeasured slander, let us wait with composure and tranquillity of mind until God bring light out of darkness.

65. *You have a guard.* By these words, Pilate means that he grants their request by permitting them to post soldiers to keep watch. This permission bound them more firmly, so that they could not escape by any evasion; for though they were not ashamed to break out against Christ after his resurrection, yet with Pilate's signet they as truly shut their own mouths as they shut up the sepulchre.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVIII. 1. Now in the evening of the Sabbaths,[1] which began to dawn towards the first of the Sabbaths, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. 2. And, lo, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and approached, and rolled away the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 3. And his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was white as snow. 4. And through fear of him the guards trembled, and became as	XVI. 1. And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the wife of James, and Salome, bought spices, to come and anoint him. 2. And very early in the morning of the first day of the Sabbaths,[2] they come to the tomb at the rising of the sun.[3] 3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb? 4. And having looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. 5. And entering into the tomb,	XXIV. 1. And on the first day of the Sabbaths, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, carrying the spices which they had prepared, and some women with them. 2. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3. And having entered, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. 4. And it happened, while they were in consternation on this account, lo, two men stood near them in shining garments. 5. And when the women were terrified, and bowed their

[1] "*Ou, au bout du Sabbaths, comme le jour apparoissoit pour luire pour le premier de la semaine;*"—"*or, at the end of the Sabbath, as the day began to dawn for the first of the week.*"

[2] "Le premier des Sabbaths; *ou, jour de la semaine;*"—"the first of the Sabbaths, *or, day of the week.*"

[3] "Le soleil estant ja levé; *ou, commençant à se lever, ou, n'estant encore levé;*"—"the sun having already risen; *or, beginning to rise, or, not having yet risen.*"

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
dead men. 5. But the angel answering, said to the women, Fear not; for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. 6. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay: 7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall you see him: lo, I have told you.	they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe; and they were afraid. 6. But he saith to them, Be not terrified: you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; he is risen, he is not here: lo, the place where they laid him. 7. But go away, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall you see him, as he said to you.	face to the earth, they said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6. He is not here, but is risen: remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7. Saying, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of wicked men, and be crucified, and rise again on the third day. 8. And they remembered his words.

We now come to the closing scene of our redemption. For the lively assurance of our reconciliation with God arises from Christ having come from hell as the conqueror of death, in order to show that he had the power of a new life at his disposal. Justly, therefore, does Paul say that there will be no gospel, and that the hope of salvation will be vain and fruitless, unless we believe that *Christ is risen from the dead*, (1 Cor. xv. 14.) For then did Christ obtain righteousness for us, and open up our entrance into heaven; and, in short, then was our adoption ratified, when Christ, by rising from the dead, exerted the power of his Spirit, and proved himself to be the Son of God. Now, though he manifested his resurrection in a different manner from what the sense of our flesh would have desired, still the method of which he approved ought to be regarded by us also as the best. He went out of the grave without a witness, that the emptiness of the place might be the earliest indication; next, he chose to have it announced to the women by the angels that he was alive; and shortly afterwards he appeared to the women, and, finally, to the apostles, and on various occasions.

Thus he gradually brought his followers, according to their capacity, to a larger measure of knowledge. He began with *the women*, and not only presented himself to be seen by them, but even gave them a commission to announce the gospel to the apostles, so as to become their instructors.

This was intended, first, to chastise the indifference of the apostles, who were like persons half-dead with fear, while the women ran with alacrity to the sepulchre, and likewise obtained no ordinary reward. For though their design to anoint Christ, as if he were still dead, was not free from blame, still he forgave their weakness, and bestowed on them distinguished honour, by taking away from men the apostolic office, and committing it to them for a short time. In this manner also he exhibited an instance of what Paul tells us, that he *chooses those things which are foolish and weak in the world* to abase the loftiness of the flesh. And never shall we be duly prepared to learn this article of our faith in any other manner than by laying aside all pride, and submitting to receive the testimony of the women. Not that our faith ought to be confined within such narrow limits, but because the Lord, in order to make trial of our faith, determines that we shall become fools, before he admits us to a more ample knowledge of his mysteries.

So far as regards the narrative, Matthew says only that *the two Marys came to see the sepulchre;* Mark adds a third, *Salome*, and says that they *bought spices to anoint the body;* and from Luke we infer, that not two or three only, but many women came. But we know that it is customary with the sacred writers, when speaking of a great number, to name but a few of them. It may also be conjectured with probability, that *Mary Magdalene*, with another companion—whether she was sent before, or ran forward of her own accord—arrived at the grave before the rest of the women. And this appears to be conveyed by the words of Matthew, that those two women *came for the purpose of seeing;* for without *seeing* Christ, they had no means of anointing him. He says nothing, in the meantime, about the purpose which they had formed of doing honour to him; for the principal object which he had in view was, to testify of the resurrection.

But it may be asked, how could this zeal of the women, which was mixed with superstition, be acceptable to God? I have no doubt, that the custom of anointing the dead, which they had borrowed from the Fathers, was applied by them to its proper object, which was, to draw consolation,

amidst the mourning of death, from the hope of the life to come. I readily acknowledge that they sinned in not immediately raising their minds to that prediction which they had heard from the lips of their Master, when he foretold that he would rise again on the third day.[1] But as they retain the general principle of the final resurrection, that defect is forgiven, which would justly have vitiated, as the phrase is, the whole of the action. Thus God frequently accepts, with fatherly kindness, the works of the saints, which, without pardon, not only would not have pleased him, but would even have been justly rejected with shame and punishment. It is, therefore, an astonishing display of the goodness of Christ, that he kindly and generously presents himself alive to the women, who did him wrong in seeking him among the dead. Now if he did not permit them to come in vain to his grave, we may conclude with certainty, that those who now aspire to him by faith will not be disappointed; for the distance of places does not prevent believers from enjoying him who fills heaven and earth by the power of his Spirit.

Mark XVI. 1. *And when the sabbath was past.* The meaning is the same as in Matthew, *In the evening, which began to dawn towards the first day of the sabbaths*, and in Luke, *On the first day of the sabbaths.* For while we know that the Jews began to reckon their day from the commencement of the preceding night, everybody understands, that when the sabbath was past, the women resolved among themselves to visit the sepulchre, so as to come there before the dawn of day. The two Evangelists give the name of *the first day of the sabbaths*, to that which came first in order between two sabbaths. Some of the Latin translators[2] have rendered it *one*, and many have been led into this blunder through ignorance of the Hebrew language; for though אחד sometimes means *one*, and sometimes *first*, the Evangelists, as in many other passages, have followed the Hebrew idiom, and used the word *μίαν*, *one*.[3] But that no one may be led

[1] "Quand il avoit predit qu'il ressusciteroit le troisieme jour."

[2] "Aucuns en la translation Latine."

[3] "Et ont ici mis le mot Grec qui signifie *Un*;"—"and have put here the Greek word which means *One*."

astray by the ambiguity, I have stated their meaning more clearly. As to *the purchase of the spices*, Luke's narrative differs, in some respects, from the words of Mark; for Luke says that they *returned* into the city, and *procured spices, and then rested* one day, *according to the commandment of the law*, before pursuing their journey. But Mark, in introducing into the same part of the narrative two different events, attends less accurately than Luke to the distinction of dates; for he blends with their setting out on the journey what had been previously done. In the substance of the fact they perfectly agree, that the women, after having observed the holy rest, left home during the darkness of the night, that they might reach the sepulchre about the break of day.

We ought also to recollect what I have formerly suggested, that the custom of anointing the dead, though it was common among many heathen nations, was applied to a lawful use by the Jews alone, to whom it had been handed down by the Fathers, to confirm them in the faith of the resurrection. For without having this object in view, to embalm a dead body, which has no feeling, would be an idle and empty solace, as we know that the Egyptians bestowed great labour and anxiety on this point, without looking for any advantage. But by this sacred symbol, God represented to the Jews the image of life in death, to lead them to expect that out of putrefaction and dust they would one day acquire new vigour. Now as the resurrection of Christ, by its quickening vigour, penetrated every sepulchre, so as to breathe life into the dead, so it abolished those outward ceremonies. For himself, he needed not those aids, but they were owing to the ignorance of the women, who were not yet fully aware that he was free from corruption.

3. *And they said among themselves.* Mark alone expresses this doubt; but as the other Evangelists relate that *the stone was rolled away by the angel*, it may easily be inferred, that they remained in perplexity and doubt as to what they should do, until the entrance was opened up by the hand of God. But let us learn from this, that in consequence of having been carried away by their zeal, they came there

without due consideration. They had seen *a stone* placed before the sepulchre, to hinder any one from entering. Why did not this occur to them, when they were at home and at leisure, but because they were seized with such fear and astonishment, that thought and recollection failed them? But as it is a holy zeal that blinds them, God does not charge them with this fault.

Matthew XXVIII. 2. *And, lo, a great earthquake.* By many signs the Lord showed the presence of his glory, that he might more fully prepare the hearts of the holy women to reverence the mystery.[1] For since it was not a matter of little consequence to know that the Son of God had obtained a victory over death, (on which the principal point of our salvation is founded,) it was necessary to remove all doubts, that the divine majesty might be openly and manifestly presented to the eyes of the women. Matthew says, therefore, that *there was an earthquake*, by which the divine power which I have mentioned might be perceived. And by this prodigy, it was proper that the women should be allowed to expect nothing human or earthly, but to raise their minds to a work of God which was new, and surpassed the expectations of men.

The *raiment* and *the countenance* of the angel, too, might be said to be rays by which the splendour of Godhead was diffused, so as to enable them to perceive that it was not a mortal man that stood near them, having the face of a man. For though *dazzling light*, or *the whiteness of snow*, is nothing in comparison of the boundless glory of God, but rather, if we wish to know him aright, we ought not to imagine to ourselves any colour; yet when he makes known by outward signs that he is present, he invites us to him, as far as our weakness can endure. Still we ought to know that the visible signs of his presence are exhibited to us, that our minds may conceive of him as invisible; and that, under bodily forms, we obtain a taste of his spiritual essence, that we may seek him spiritually. Yet it cannot be doubted that, together

[1] "A une reverence du mystere."

with outward signs, there was an inward power, which engraved on the hearts of the women an impression of Deity. For though at first they were struck with amazement, yet it will appear, from what follows, that they gathered courage, and were gradually instructed in such a manner, that they perceived the hand of God to be present.

Our three Evangelists, from a desire of brevity, leave out what is more fully related by John, (xx. 1–12,) which, we know, is not unusual with them. There is also this difference, that Matthew and Mark mention but *one angel*, while John and Luke speak of *two*. But this apparent contradiction also is easily removed; for we know how frequently in Scripture instances occur of that figure of speech by which a part is taken for the whole. There were *two angels*, therefore, who appeared first to Mary, and afterwards to her other companions; but as the attention of the women was chiefly directed to the angel who spoke, Matthew and Mark have satisfied themselves with relating his message. Besides, when Matthew says that *the angel sat on a stone*, there is in his words ὕστερον πρότερον, *an inversion of the order of events*; or, at least, that order was disregarded by him; for *the angel* did not immediately appear, but while the women were held in suspense and anxiety by an event so strange and astonishing.

4. *Through fear the guards trembled.* The Lord struck *the guards* with *terror*, as if he had engraved their consciences with a hot iron, so as to constrain them reluctantly to feel his divine power. The *terror* had, at least, the effect of hindering them from treating with careless mockery the report of the resurrection which was to be spread abroad shortly afterwards. For though they were not ashamed of prostituting their tongues for him, still they were compelled, whether they would or not, to acknowledge inwardly what they wickedly denied before men. Nor can it be doubted that, when they were at liberty to talk freely among their acquaintances, they frankly admitted what they durst not openly avow, in consequence of having been gained over by money.

We must attend to the distinction between the two kinds of *terror*, between which Matthew draws a comparison. The

soldiers, who were accustomed to tumults, were terrified, and were so completely overwhelmed by alarm, that they fell down like men who were almost dead; but no power was exerted to raise them from that condition. A similar terror seized the women; but their minds, which had nearly given way, were restored by the consolation which immediately followed, so as to begin, at least, to entertain some better hope. And, certainly, it is proper that the majesty of God should strike both terror and fear indiscriminately into the godly, as well as the reprobate, that all flesh may be silent before his face. But when the Lord has humbled and subdued his elect, he immediately mitigates their dread, that they may not sink under its oppressive influence; and not only so, but by the sweetness of his grace heals the wound which he had inflicted. The reprobate, on the other hand, he either overwhelms by sudden dread, or suffers to languish in slow torments. As to the soldiers themselves, they were, no doubt, *like dead men*, but without any serious impression. Like men in a state of insensibility, they tremble, indeed, for a moment, but presently forget that they were afraid; not that the remembrance of their terror was wholly obliterated, but because that lively and powerful apprehension of the power of God, to which they were compelled to yield, soon passed away from them. But we ought chiefly to attend to this point, that though they, as well as the women, were afraid, no medicine was applied to soothe their terror; for to the women only did the angel say, *Fear not.* He held out to them a ground of joy and assurance in the resurrection of Christ. Luke adds a reproof, *Why do you seek the living among the dead?* as if the angel pulled their ear, that they might no longer remain in sluggishness and despair.

7. *And go quickly, and tell his disciples.* Here God, by the angel, confers extraordinary honour on the women, by enjoining them to proclaim to the apostles themselves the chief point of our salvation. In Mark's account of it, they are expressly enjoined to carry this message to *Peter;* not because he was at that time higher in rank than the others, but because his crime, which was so disgraceful, needed

peculiar consolation to assure him that Christ had not cast him off, though he had basely and wickedly fallen. He had already entered into the sepulchre, and beheld the traces of the resurrection of Christ; but God denied him the honour, which he shortly afterwards conferred on the women, of hearing from the lips of the angel that Christ *was risen*. And, indeed, the great insensibility under which he still laboured is evident from the fact that he again fled trembling to conceal himself, as if he had seen nothing, while Mary sat down to weep at the grave. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that she and her companions, in beholding the angel, obtained the reward of their patience.

And, lo, he goeth before you into Galilee. When the angel sent the disciples *into Galilee*, he did so, I think, in order that Christ might make himself known to a great number of persons; for we know that he had lived a long time *in Galilee*. He intended also to give his followers greater liberty, that by the very circumstance of their retirement they might gradually acquire courage. Besides, by being accustomed to the places, they were aided in recognising their Master with greater certainty; for it was proper to adopt every method of confirming them, that nothing might be wanting to complete the certainty of their faith.

Lo, I have told you. By this manner of speaking the angel earnestly assures them that what is said is true. He states this, not as from himself, as if he had been the first to suggest it, but gives his signature to the promise of Christ; and, therefore, in Mark's account of it, he merely recalls to their remembrance the very words of Christ. Luke carries out the address still farther, by saying that the disciples were informed by Christ *that he must be crucified, and rise again on the third day*. But the meaning is the same; for along with his resurrection he had foretold his death. He then adds,

Luke XXIV. 8. *And they remembered his words;* by which we are taught that, though they had made little proficiency in the doctrine of Christ, still it was not lost, but was choked up, until in due time it yielded fruit.

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
XXVIII. 8. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to inform his disciples. 9. And while they went to inform his disciples, then, lo, Jesus met them, saying, Hail.[1] And they approached, and held his feet, and worshipped him. 10. Then Jesus saith to them, Fear not; go, tell my brethren to go into Galilee; and there shall they see me.	XVI. 8. And they went away quickly, and fled from the tomb; for they were seized with trembling and amazement, and said nothing to any person; for they were afraid. 9. Now, when Jesus was risen early on the first day of the Sabbath,[2] he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10. She went and told it to those who had been with him, who were mourning and weeping. 11. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe.	XXIV. 9. And returning from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. 10. Now it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and others who were with them, that told these things to the apostles. 11. And their words appeared to them as idle fancies, and they did not believe them. 12. And Peter rose, and ran to the tomb, and, stooping down, saw the linen clothes placed by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at what had happened.

Matthew XXVIII. 8. *And they departed quickly.* The three Evangelists pass by what John relates about Mary Magdalene, (xx. 2,) that she returned into the city before she had seen the angels, and complained with tears that the body of Christ had been taken away. Here they mention only the second return to the city, when she, and other women who accompanied her, *told the disciples that Christ was risen;* which they had learned both from the words and testimony of the angel, and from seeing Christ himself. Now before Christ showed himself, they already *ran to the disciples,* as they had been commanded by the angel. On the road they received a second confirmation, that they might with greater certainty assert the resurrection of the Lord.

With fear and great joy. By these words Matthew means that they were indeed gladdened by what the angel told them, but, at the same time, were struck *with fear,* so that they were held in suspense between joy and perplexity. For there are sometimes opposite feelings in the hearts of the godly, which move them alternately in opposite directions,

[1] "Bien vous soit;"—"may it be well with you."

[2] "Au premier jour du Sabbath, *ou, de la sepmaine;*"—"on the first day of the Sabbath, *or, of the week.*"

until at length the peace of the Spirit brings them into a settled condition. For if their faith had been strong, it would have given them entire composure by subduing *fear;* but now *fear*, mingled with *joy*, shows that they had not yet fully relied on the testimony of the angel. And here Christ exhibited a remarkable instance of compassion, in meeting them while they thus doubted and trembled, so as to remove all remaining doubt.

Yet there is some diversity in the words of Mark, that *they fled, seized with trembling and amazement*, so that through fear they were dismayed. But the solution is not very difficult; for though they were resolved to obey the angel, still they had not power to do so,[1] if the Lord himself had not loosed their tongues. But in what follows there is greater appearance of contradiction; for Mark does not say that Christ met them, but only that *he appeared first to Mary Magdalene*, while Luke says nothing whatever of this *appearance*. But this omission ought not to appear strange to us, since it is far from being unusual with the Evangelists.

As to the difference between the words of Matthew and of Mark, it is possible that *Magdalene* may have been a partaker of so great a favour before the other women, or even that Matthew, by synecdoche, may have extended to all what was peculiar to one of their number. It is more probable, however, that Mark names her alone, because she first obtained a sight of Christ, and in a peculiar manner, in preference to the others, and yet that her companions also saw Christ in their order, and that on this account Matthew attributes it to all them in common. This was an astonishing instance of goodness, that Christ manifested his heavenly glory to a wretched woman, *who had been possessed by seven devils*, (Luke viii. 2,) and, intending to display the light of a new and eternal life, began where there was nothing in the eyes of man but what was base and contemptible. But by this example Christ showed how generously he is wont to continue the progress

[1] "Toutesfois le moyen leur defailloit, et elles n'eussent sceu le faire;" —"yet they wanted the means, and would not have known how to do it."

of his grace, when he has once displayed it towards us; and, at the same time, he threw down the pride of the flesh.

9. *And held his feet.* This appears not to agree with the words of John, (xx. 17,) where he declares that Mary was forbidden to touch Christ. But it is easy to reconcile them. The Lord, perceiving that Mary was too eager to embrace and kiss his feet, orders her to retire; because it was proper to correct the superstition, and to point out the design of his resurrection, which Mary was withheld from perceiving, partly by an earthly and carnal affection, and partly by foolish zeal. Yet at first the Lord permitted her to touch *his feet*, that nothing might be wanting to give her a full conviction; and, therefore, Matthew immediately adds, that *they worshipped the Lord*, which was a proof that they fully recognised him.

10. *Then Jesus saith to them.* We conclude, that it was an improper *fear*, from which Christ again delivers them; for though it arose out of admiration, still it was opposed to the tranquillity of faith. That they may raise themselves to Christ, the Conqueror of death, they are commanded to be cheerful.[1] But by those words we are taught that we never know aright our Lord's resurrection, until, through the firm assurance which we have conceived in our hearts, we venture to rejoice that we have been made partakers of the same life. Our faith ought, at least, to proceed so far that fear shall not predominate.

Go, tell my brethren. When Christ ordered them to *tell* this to the disciples, by this message he again collected and raised up the Church, which was scattered and fallen down. For as it is chiefly by the faith of the resurrection that we are now quickened, so at that time it was proper that the disciples should have that life restored to them from which they had fallen. Here, too, it is proper to remark the astonishing kindness of Christ, in deigning to bestow the name of *brethren* on deserters who had basely forsaken him.

[1] "De se resjouir, et oster toute tristesse;"—"to be glad, and to lay aside all sadness."

Nor can it be doubted that he intentionally employed so kind an appellation, for the purpose of soothing the grief by which he knew that they were grievously tormented. But as the Apostles were not the only persons who were acknowledged by him as *brethren*, let us know that this message was conveyed by the command of Christ, in order that it might afterwards come to us. And, therefore, we ought not to listen with indifference to the narrative of the resurrection, when Christ, with his own mouth, kindly invites us to receive the fruit of it on the ground of our being related to him as *brethren*. As to the interpretation which some have given to the word *brethren*, as denoting the cousins and other relatives of Christ,[1] their mistake is abundantly refuted by the context; for John expressly says that *Mary came and told the disciples*, (xx. 18;) and Luke immediately adds, that *the women told these things to the apostles*. Mark also agrees with them; for he says that *Mary came and told it to the apostles, while they were mourning and weeping*.

Mark XVI. 11. *And when they heard.* The testimony of Mary alone is related by Mark; but I am convinced that all of them in common conveyed the message in obedience to the commands of Christ. And even this passage confirms more fully what I have just now said, that there is no disagreement among the Evangelists, when one of them specially attributes to Mary Magdalene what the other Evangelists represent as common to all the women, though not in an equal degree. But the disciples must have been held bound by shameful indifference, so that they did not recall to their recollection that what they had often heard from their Master was accomplished. If the women had related any thing of which they had not formerly heard, there would have been some reason for not immediately believing them in a matter which was incredible; but now they must have been uncommonly stupid in holding as a fable or a dream what had been so frequently promised and declared by the Son of God, when eye-witnesses assured them that it was accomplished. Besides, their unbelief having deprived them

[1] "Les cousins et autres parens de Christ."

of sound understanding, they not only refuse the light of truth, but reject it *as an idle fancy*, as Luke tells us. Hence it appears that they had yielded so far to temptation, that their minds had lost nearly all relish for the words of Christ.

Luke XXIV. 12. *And Peter arose, and ran to the tomb.* I have no doubt that Luke here inverts the order of the narrative, as may be readily inferred from the words of John, (xx. 3;) and, in my opinion, the word *ran* (ἔδραμεν) might justly be rendered as a pluperfect tense, *had run.* All who possess a tolerable acquaintance with Scripture are aware that it is customary with Hebrew writers to relate afterwards those occurrences which had been omitted in their proper place. Luke mentions this circumstance for the purpose of showing more strongly the obstinacy of the apostles in despising the words of the women, when Peter had already seen the empty grave, and had been compelled to *wonder at* an evident proof of the resurrection.

Matthew.

XXVIII. 11. And while they were departing, lo, some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things which had happened. 12. And having assembled with the elders, and entered into consultation, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13. Saying, Say that his disciples came by night, and stole him, while you were asleep. 14. And if this come to the ears of the governor, we will persuade him, and ensure your safety. 15. And they took the money, and did as they had been instructed: and this statement is currently reported among the Jews till the present day.

Matthew XXVIII. 11. *And while they were departing.* It is not only credible, but the fact is manifest, that the soldiers, to whom had been intrusted the charge of the sepulchre, were corrupted by a bribe, so that they were prepared to tell a lie at the bidding of the priests. They knew well that there was nothing which the priests dreaded more than that a report should gain credit that Christ rose on the third day after his death; and they knew that they had been sent there, that, by guarding the body, they might suppress that report. Those men, therefore, being addicted to making gain, and seizing on opportunities of making it from every

quarter, after having found that their diligence was of no service to them, contrive a new method of cheating their employers out of their money. The words of Matthew—*some of them came*—leave it uncertain if a few cunning men adopted this resolution without communicating with the rest, or if they were sent, by a general agreement, in the name of all. The latter supposition appears to be more probable; for Matthew afterwards says that *money was given*, not to one or two, but generally *to the soldiers*, to induce them to commit perjury. It is at all events certain that, whether they all plotted together, or only a part of them, they sought to make profit of the cruel and implacable hatred which the priests bore towards Christ; and that, looking upon them as convicted of a crime, they abused their evil conscience to extort money from them. For, as usually happens with all wicked men, the priests, conscious of having done wrong, in order to cover their disgrace, were compelled to bribe the soldiers by a *large reward*. Thus it is evident that the reprobate, after having once given themselves up to a course of sinning, are continually entangled in new crimes; and this arises out of their desire to conceal their shame before men, while they give themselves no concern about the offence committed against God. Those wretched men not only bribe the soldiers by *a large sum of money*, but expose their own reputation and life to serious danger, should cognizance be taken of the crime. And what constrains them, in addition to the expense which they have laid out, to incur so serious a risk, but because inveterate rage does not permit them to withdraw until they have added sin to sin?

15. *And this statement is currently reported.* It was the finishing stroke of the vengeance of God to blind the Jews, that the resurrection of Christ was buried by the perjury of the soldiers, and that so gross a falsehood was believed. And hence it is evident that those who did not believe that Christ was risen were deceived by a voluntary error, as the world voluntarily gives itself up to be deceived by the snares of Satan. For if a man had but opened his eyes, it was unnecessary that he should make a long inquiry. Armed

soldiers say that *the body of Christ was stolen from them* by a feeble, timid, small, and unarmed body of men. What plausible grounds have they for saying so? They add that this was done *while they were asleep.* How then do they come to know that *it was stolen?* And if they had any suspicion of the disciples, why did they not track their footsteps? Why did they not, at least, make a noise? It was therefore a childish subterfuge, which would not have screened them from punishment, if they had had to deal with an honest and upright governor; but through the connivance of Pilate, that enormous wickedness was allowed to pass unnoticed. In like manner, we see it happen every day, that irreligious judges give themselves little trouble, when truth is oppressed by fraud and malice; but, on the contrary, if they are not afraid of suffering damage, they appear to enter into collusion with base and infamous men.

Though it may appear strange that God should permit this false report to gain currency to extinguish the glory of his Son, we ought to render the honour which is due to his just vengeance. For we perceive that this nation deserved to have its light taken away by clouds, because it so eagerly seizes hold on an idle and childish falsehood; next, because almost all have struck on *the stone of stumbling*, it was proper that their eyes should be darkened, that they might not see that the cup of giddiness was presented to them; and, in short, that they were abandoned to every kind of madness, as Isaiah had foretold, (vi. 9.) For God would never have permitted them to be deceived by such a foolish credulity, but in order that those who had despised the Redeemer might be shut out from the hope of salvation; as he now inflicts a similar punishment on the ingratitude of the world, by giving loose reins to the reprobate, that they may go from bad to worse. But though this falsehood obtained currency among the Jews, this did not prevent the truth of the Gospel from flying at liberty to the very ends of the earth, as it always rises victorious over all the obstacles in the world.

MARK. LUKE.

XVI. 12. And after these things he appeared in another form to two of them who were walking, and were going into the country.

XXIV. 13. And, lo, two of them were going, on the same day, to a village which was about sixty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, called Emmaus; 14. And they conversed with each other about all things that had taken place. 15. And it happened, while they were talking and reasoning, Jesus himself approached, and went with them. 16. But their eyes were held that they did not know him. 17. And he said to them, What are those discourses which you hold with each other, while you talk? and why[1] are you sad? 18. And one, whose name was Cleopas, answering said to him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and knowest thou not those things which have happened there in these days? 19. And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, About Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and in word before God and all the people: 20. And how our chief priests delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21. But we hoped that he would be the person who should redeem Israel; and besides all these things, to-day is the third day since these things happened. 22. But also some women of our company made us astonished, who went early in the morning to the tomb; 23. And not having found his body, came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24. And some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it to be as the women said; but him they saw not. 25. And he said to them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all things which the prophets have spoken! 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory? 27. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures those things which related to himself. 28. And they approached the village to which they were going; and he seemed as if he would go farther. 29. And they constrained him, saying, Remain with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is spent. And he went in to remain with them. 30. And it happened, while he sat at table with them, he took bread, and blessed,[2] and brake, and gave to them.

Luke XXIV. 13. *And, lo, two of them.* Although Mark touches slightly and briefly on this narrative, and Matthew and John say not a single word respecting it; yet as it is highly useful to be known and worthy of being remembered, it is not without reason that Luke treats it with so much exactness. But I have already mentioned on various occasions, that each of the Evangelists had his portion so appropriately assigned to him by the Spirit of God, that what is not to be found in one or two of them may be learned from

[1] "Pourquoy."
[2] "Rendit graces;"—"gave thanks."

the others. For there are also many appearances[1] which are mentioned by John, but are passed over in silence by our three Evangelists.

Before I come to the minute details, it will be proper to begin with stating briefly, that those were two chosen witnesses, by whom the Lord intended, not to convince the apostles that he was risen, but to reprove their slowness; for though at first they were of no service, yet their testimony, strengthened by other aids, had at length its due weight with the apostles. Who they were is uncertain, except that from the name of one of them, whom we shall find that Luke shortly afterwards calls *Cleopas*, we may conjecture that they did not belong to the eleven. Emmaus was an ancient, and by no means inconsiderable, town, which the Romans afterwards called *Nicopolis;* and was not at a great distance *from Jerusalem*, for *sixty furlongs* are not more than seven thousand and four hundred paces.[2] But the place is named by Luke, not so much on account of its celebrity, as to add certainty to the narrative.

14. *And they were conversing with each other.* It was a proof of godliness that they endeavoured to cherish their faith in Christ, though small and weak; for their *conversation* had no other object than to employ their reverence for their Master as a shield against the offence of the cross. Now though their questions and disputes showed an ignorance which was worthy of reproof—since, after having been informed that the resurrection of Christ would take place, they were astonished at hearing it mentioned—still their docility afforded Christ an opportunity of removing their error. For many persons intentionally put questions, because they have resolved obstinately to reject the truth; but when men are desirous to embrace the truth submissively, though they may

[1] "Car aussi bien il y a plusieurs recits de diverses fois que Christ s'est monstré;"—"for there are also many narratives of various times that Christ showed himself."

[2] "Sept mille et quatre cens pas d'Italie, qui font quatre lieuës et demie ou environ;"—"seven thousand and four hundred Italian paces, which are equal to four leagues and a half, or thereabouts."

waver on account of very small objections, and stop at slight difficulties, their holy desire to obey God finds favour in his sight, so that he stretches out his hand to them, brings them to full conviction, and does not permit them to remain irresolute. We ought, at least, to hold it as certain, that when we inquire about Christ, if this be done from a modest desire to learn, the door is opened for him to assist us; nay, we may almost say that we then call for himself to be our Teacher; as irreligious men, by their unholy speeches, drive him to a distance from them.

16. *But their eyes were restrained.* The Evangelist expressly states this, lest any one should think that the aspect of Christ's body was changed, and that the features of his countenance were different from what they had formerly been.[1] For though Christ remained like himself, he was not recognised, because the eyes of beholders were held; and this takes away all suspicion of a phantom or false imagination. But hence we learn how great is the weakness of all our senses, since neither eyes nor ears discharge their office, unless so far as power is incessantly communicated to them from heaven. Our members do indeed possess their natural properties; but to make us more fully sensible that they are held by us at the will of another, God retains in his own hand the use of them, so that we ought ever to reckon it to be one of his daily favours, that our ears hear and our eyes see; for if he does not every hour quicken our senses, all their power will immediately give way. I readily acknowledge that our senses are not frequently held in the same manner as happened at that time, so as to make so gross a mistake about an object presented to us; but by a single example God shows that it is in his power to direct the faculties which he has bestowed, so as to assure us that nature is subject to his will. Now if the bodily eyes, to which peculiarly belongs the power of seeing, are held, whenever it pleases the Lord, so as not to perceive the objects presented to them, our understandings would possess no

[1] "Et qu'il y eut autres traits de visage qu'auparavant."

greater acuteness, even though their original condition remained unimpaired; but now, in this wretched corruption, after having been deprived of their light, they are liable to innumerable deceptions, and are sunk into such gross stupidity, that they can do nothing but commit mistakes, as happens to us incessantly. The proper discrimination between truth and falsehood, therefore, does not arise from the sagacity of our own mind, but comes to us from the Spirit of wisdom. But it is chiefly in the contemplation of heavenly things that our stupidity is discovered; for not only do we imagine false appearances to be true, but we turn the clear light into darkness.

17. *What are those discourses which you hold with each other?* What was at that time, as we perceive, done openly by Christ, we daily feel to be accomplished in ourselves in a secret manner; which is, that of his own accord he approaches us unperceived for the purpose of instructing us. Now from the reply of *Cleopas* it is still more evident that, as I have lately mentioned, though they were in doubt and uncertainty about the resurrection of Christ, yet they had in their hearts a reverence for his doctrine, so that they were far from having any inclination to revolt. For they do not expect that Christ will anticipate them by making himself known, or that this fellow-traveller, whoever he may be, will speak of him respectfully; but, on the contrary, having but a small and obscure light, *Cleopas* throws out a few sparks on an unknown man, which were intended to enlighten his mind, if he were ignorant and uninformed. The name of Christ was, at that time, so generally held in hatred and detestation, that it was not safe to speak of him respectfully; but spurning from him suspicion, he calls Christ *a prophet* of God, and declares that he is one of his disciples. And though this designation falls greatly below the Divine Majesty of Christ, yet the commendation which he bestows, though moderate, is laudable; for *Cleopas* had no other intention than to procure for Christ disciples who would submit to his Gospel. It is uncertain, however, if it was through ignorance that *Cleopas* spoke of Christ in terms less magnificent than the case required, or if

he intended to begin with first principles, which were better known, and to rise higher by degrees. Certain it is, that a little afterwards, he does not simply place Christ in the ordinary rank of *prophets*, but says that he and others *believed him to be the Redeemer*.

19. *Powerful in deed and in word.* Luke has employed nearly the same form of expression in reference to the person of Stephen, (Acts vii. 22,) where he says of Moses, by way of commendation, that he was *powerful in words and in actions*. But in this passage it is uncertain if it is on account of miracles that Christ is said to be powerful in actions, (as if it had been said that he was endued with divine virtues which proved that he was sent from heaven ;) or if the phrase is more extensive, and means that he excelled both in ability to teach, and in holiness of life and other remarkable endowments. I prefer the latter of these views.

Before God and all the people. The addition of these words ought not to be reckoned superfluous; for they mean that the high excellence of Christ was so well known, and was demonstrated by such undoubted proofs, that he had no hypocrisy or vain ostentation. And hence we may obtain a brief definition of a true *Prophet*, namely, that to what he speaks he will likewise add *power in actions*, and will not only endeavour to appear excellent before men, but to act with sincerity as under the eyes of God.

21. *But we hoped.* From what follows it is evident that the hope which they had entertained respecting Christ was not broken off, though at first sight such might appear to be the import of their words. But as a person who had received no previous instruction in the Gospel might be apt to be prejudiced by the narrative which he was about to give respecting the condemnation of Christ, that he was condemned by *the rulers* of the Church, *Cleopas* meets this offence by *the hope of redemption*. And though he afterwards shows that it is with trembling and hesitation that he continues in this hope, yet he industriously collects all that can contribute to its support. For it is probable that he mentions the third

day for no other reason than that the Lord had promised that after three days he would rise again. When he afterwards relates that *the women had not found the body, and that they had seen a vision of angels*, and that what the women had said about the empty grave was likewise confirmed by the testimony of the men, the whole amounts to this, that Christ had risen. Thus the holy man, hesitating between faith and fear, employs what is adapted to nourish faith, and struggles against fear to the utmost of his power.

25. *And he said to them.* This reproof appears to be too harsh and severe for a weak man such as this was; but whoever attends to all the circumstances will have no difficulty in perceiving that our Lord had good reason for rebuking so sharply those on whom he had long bestowed labour to little purpose, and almost without any fruit. For it ought to be observed, that what is here said was not confined to these two persons, but, as a reproof of a common fault, was intended to be conveyed by their lips to the rest of their companions. So frequently had Christ forewarned them of his death—so frequently had he even discoursed about a new and spiritual life, and confirmed his doctrine by the inspired statements of the prophets—that he would seem to have spoken to the deaf, or rather to blocks and stones; for they are struck with such horror at his death, that they know not to what hand to turn. This hesitation, therefore, he justly attributes to *folly*, and assigns as the reason of it their carelessness in not having been more ready *to believe*. Nor does he only reprove them because, while they had the best Teacher, they were dull and *slow* to learn, but because they had not attended to the instructions of the Prophets; as if he had said, that their insensibility admitted of no excuse, because it was owing to themselves alone, since the doctrine of the Prophets was abundantly clear, and had been fully expounded to them. In like manner, the greater part of men, at the present day, remain in ignorance through their own fault, because they are obstinate, and refuse to be instructed. But let us observe that Christ, perceiving that his disciples are excessively sluggish, commences with reproof, in order to arouse

them; for this is the way in which we must subdue those whom we have found to be hardened or indolent.

26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?* There is no room to doubt that our Lord discoursed to them about the office of Messiah, as it is described by the Prophets, that they might not take offence at his death; and a journey of three or four hours afforded abundance of time for a full explanation of those matters. Christ did not, therefore, assert in three words, that *Christ ought to have suffered*, but explained at great length that he had been sent in order that he might expiate, by the sacrifice of his death, the sins of the world,—that he might become a curse in order to remove the curse,—that by having guilt imputed to him he might wash away the pollutions of others. Luke has put this sentence in the form of a question, in order to present it with greater force; from which it may be inferred, that he employed arguments for showing the necessity of his death. The sum of what is stated is, that the disciples are wrong in distressing their minds about their Master's death, (without which he could not discharge what belonged to Christ; because his sacrifice was the most important part of redemption;) for in this way they shut the gate, that he might not enter into his kingdom. This ought to be carefully observed; for since Christ is deprived of the honour due to him, if he is not reckoned to be a sacrifice for sins, the only way by which he could enter into his glory was that *humiliation* or *emptying*, (Philip. ii. 7,) out of which the Redeemer had arisen. But we see that no trivial offence is committed among us, at the present day, by the inversion of this order; for among the multitude of those who declare, in magnificent language, that Christ is King, and who extol him by divine titles, hardly one person in ten thinks of the grace which has been brought to us by his death.

27. *And beginning at Moses.* This passage shows us in what manner Christ is made known to us through the Gospel. It is when light is thrown on the knowledge of him by the Law and the Prophets. For never was there a more able

or skilful teacher of the Gospel than our Lord himself; and we see that he borrows from *the Law and the Prophets* the proof of his doctrine. If it be objected that he began with easy lessons, that the disciples might gradually dismiss *the Prophets*, and pass on to the perfect Gospel, this conjecture is easily refuted; for we shall afterwards find it stated, that all the apostles had *their understanding opened*, not to be wise without the assistance of the Law, but *to understand the Scriptures*. In order that Christ may be made known to us through the Gospel, it is therefore necessary that Moses and the Prophets should go before as guides, to show us the way. It is necessary to remind readers of this, that they may not lend an ear to fanatics, who, by suppressing *the Law and the Prophets*, wickedly mutilate the Gospel; as if God intended that any testimony which he has ever given respecting his Son should become useless.

In what manner we must apply to Christ those passages respecting him which are to be found in every part of *the Law and the Prophets*, we have not now leisure to explain.[1] Let it suffice to state briefly, that there are good reasons why Christ is called *the end of the law*, (Rom. x. 4.) For however obscurely and at a distance Moses may exhibit Christ in shadows, rather than in a full portrait, (Heb. x. 1,) this, at least, is beyond dispute, that unless there be in the family of Abraham one exalted Head, under whom the people may be united in one body, the covenant which God made with the holy fathers will be nullified and revoked. Besides, since God commanded that the tabernacle and the ceremonies of the law should be adjusted to a heavenly pattern, (Exod. xxv. 40; Heb. viii. 5,) it follows that the sacrifices and the other parts of the service of the temple, if the reality of them is to be found nowhere else, would be an idle and useless sport.[2] This very argument is copiously illustrated by the apostle, (Heb. ix. 1;) for, assuming this principle, that the visible ceremonies of the law are shadows of spiritual things, he shows that in the whole of the legal

[1] "Cela passeroit la mesure de ce present œuvre;"—"that would exceed the limits of the present work."

[2] "Un jeu d'enfans;"—"a game for children."

priesthood, in the sacrifices, and in the form of the sanctuary, we ought to seek Christ.

Bucer, too, somewhere throws out a judicious conjecture, that, amidst this obscurity, the Jews were accustomed to pursue a certain method of interpreting Scripture which had been handed down to them by tradition from the fathers. But that I may not involve my inquiries in any uncertainty, I shall satisfy myself with that natural and simple method which is found universally in all the prophets, who were eminently skilled in the exposition of the Law. From the Law, therefore, we may properly learn Christ, if we consider that the covenant which God made with the fathers was founded on the Mediator; that the sanctuary, by which God manifested the presence of his grace, was consecrated by his blood; that the Law itself, with its promises, was sanctioned by the shedding of blood; that a single priest was chosen out of the whole people, to appear in the presence of God, in the name of all, not as an ordinary mortal, but clothed in sacred garments; and that no hope of reconciliation with God was held out to men but through the offering of sacrifice. Besides, there is a remarkable prediction, that the kingdom would be perpetuated in *the tribe of Judah*, (Gen. xlix. 10.) The prophets themselves, as we have hinted, drew far more striking portraits of the Mediator, though they had derived their earliest acquaintance with him from Moses; for no other office was assigned to them than to renew the remembrance of the covenant, to point out more clearly the spiritual worship of God, to found on the Mediator the hope of salvation, and to show more clearly the method of reconciliation. Yet since it had pleased God to delay the full revelation till the coming of his Son, the interpretation of them was not superfluous.

28. *And they drew near to the village.* There is no reason for supposing, as some commentators have done, that this was a different place from *Emmaus;* for the journey was not so long as to make it necessary for them to take rest for the night at a nearer lodging. We know that seven thousand paces—even though a person were to walk slowly for his

own gratification—would be accomplished in four hours at the utmost; and, therefore, I have no doubt that Christ had now reached *Emmaus*.

And he seemed as if he would go farther. Now as to the question, Can insincerity apply to him who is the eternal truth of God? I answer, that the Son of God was under no obligation to make all his designs known. Still, as insincerity of any kind is a sort of falsehood, the difficulty is not yet removed; more especially as this example is adduced by many to prove that they are at liberty to tell lies. But I reply, that Christ might without falsehood have pretended what is here mentioned, in the same manner that he gave himself out to be a stranger passing along the road; for there was the same reason for both. A somewhat more ingenious solution is given by Augustine, (in his work addressed *To Consentius*, Book II., chap. xiii., and in the book of *Questions on the Gospels*, chap. li.,) for he chooses to enumerate this kind of feigning among tropes and figures, and afterwards among parables and fables. For my own part, I am satisfied with this single consideration, that as Christ for the time threw a veil over the eyes of those with whom he was conversing, so that he had assumed a different character, and was regarded by them as an ordinary stranger, so, when he appeared for the time to intend to go farther, it was not through pretending any thing else than what he had resolved to do, but because he wished to conceal the manner of his departure; for none will deny that *he did go farther*, since he had then withdrawn from human society. So then by this feigning he did not deceive his disciples, but held them for a little in suspense, till the proper time should arrive for making himself known. It is, therefore, highly improper to attempt to make Christ an advocate of falsehood; and we are no more at liberty to plead his example for feigning any thing, than to endeavour to equal his divine power in shutting the eyes of men. Our safest course is to adhere to the rule which has been laid down to us, to speak with truth and simplicity; not that our Lord himself ever departed from the law of his Father, but because, without confining himself to the letter of the commandments, he kept by the true meaning of the

law; but we, on account of the weakness of our senses, need to be restrained in a different manner.

30. *He took bread.* *Augustine*, and the greater part of other commentators along with him, have thought that Christ gave the *bread*, not as an ordinary meal, but as the sacred symbol of his body. And, indeed, it might be said with some plausibility, that the Lord was at length recognised in the spiritual mirror of the Lord's Supper; for the disciples did not know him, when they beheld him with the bodily eyes. But as this conjecture rests on no probable grounds, I choose rather to view the words of Luke as meaning that Christ, in *taking the bread, gave thanks* according to his custom. But it appears that he employed his peculiar and ordinary form of prayer, to which he knew that the disciples had been habitually accustomed, that, warned by this sign, they might arouse their senses. In the meantime, let us learn by the example of our Master, whenever we eat bread, to offer thanksgiving to the Author of life,—an action which will distinguish us from irreligious men.

MARK.	LUKE.
XVI. 13. And they went away and told it to the rest, but neither did they believe them. 14. Afterwards he appeared to the eleven while they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who	XXIV. 31. And their eyes were opened, and they recognised him;[1] and he vanished from their eyes.[2] 32. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked to us on the road, and opened to us the Scriptures? 33. And they arose in the same hour,[3] and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven assembled, and those who were with them, 34. Saying, The Lord is actually risen, and hath appeared to Simon. 35. Then they related what had taken place on the road, and how he had been recognised by them in the breaking of bread. 36. And while they were speaking these things, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said to them, Peace be to you. 37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and thought that they saw

[1] "Tellement qu'ils le recognurent;"—"in such a manner that they recognised him."

[2] "Mais il s'esvanouit de devant eux;"—"but he vanished from before them."

[3] "Au mesme instant;"—"that very instant."

MARK.	LUKE.
saw him after he was risen.	a spirit. 38. And he said to them, Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me have. 40. And having said these things, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Luke XXIV. 31. *And their eyes were opened.* By these words, we are taught that there was not in Christ any *metamorphosis*, or *variety of forms*, by which he might impose on the eyes of men, (as the poets feign their *Proteus*,) but that, on the contrary, the eyes of beholders were mistaken, because they were covered; just as, shortly afterwards, *he vanished from the eyes* of those very persons, not because his body was in itself invisible, but because God, by withdrawing their vigour, blunted their acuteness. Nor ought we to wonder that Christ, as soon as he was recognised, immediately disappeared; for it was not advantageous that they should any longer behold him, lest, as they were naturally too much addicted to the earth, they might desire again to bring him back to an earthly life. So far, then, as it was necessary to assure them of his resurrection, he made himself visible to them; but by the sudden departure, he taught them that they must seek him elsewhere than in the world, because the completion of the new life was his ascension to heaven.

32. *Did not our heart burn within us?* Their recognition of Christ led the disciples to a lively perception of the secret and hidden grace of the Spirit, which he had formerly bestowed upon them. For God sometimes works in his people in such a manner, that for a time they are not aware of the power of the Spirit, (of which, however, they are not destitute,) or, at least, that they do not perceive it distinctly, but only feel it by a secret movement. Thus the disciples had formerly indeed felt an ardour, which they now remember, but which they had not then observed: now that Christ has made himself known to them, they at length begin to consider the grace which they had formerly, as it were, swal-

lowed without tasting it, and perceive that they were stupid. For they accuse themselves of indifference, as if they had said, "How did it happen that we did not recognise him while he was talking? for when he penetrated into our hearts, we ought to have perceived who he was." But they conclude that he is Christ, not simply from the bare sign that his word was efficacious to inflame their hearts, but because they ascribe to him the honour which belongs to him, that when he speaks with the mouth, he likewise inflames their hearts inwardly by the warmth of his Spirit. Paul, indeed, boasts that *the ministration of the Spirit* was given to him, (2 Cor. iii. 8;) and Scripture frequently adorns the ministers of the word with such titles as the following; that they convert the hearts, enlighten the understandings, and renew men so as to become pure and holy sacrifices; but then it is not to show what they do by their own power, but rather what the Lord accomplishes by means of them. But both belong equally to Christ alone, to pronounce the outward voice, and to form the hearts efficaciously to the obedience of faith.

It cannot be doubted that he then engraved an uncommon mark on the hearts of these two men, that they might at length perceive that in speaking he had breathed into them a divine warmth. For though the word of the Lord is always *fire*, yet a fiery vigour was at that time manifested in a peculiar and unusual manner in the discourse of Christ, and was intended to be an evident proof of his divine power; for it is he alone *who baptizeth in the Holy Ghost and in fire*, (Luke iii. 16.) Yet let us remember that it is the proper fruit of heavenly doctrine, whoever may be the minister of it, to kindle the fire of the Spirit in the hearts of men, to purify and cleanse the affections of the flesh, or rather to burn them up, and to kindle a truly fervent love of God; and by its flame, as it were, to carry away men entirely to heaven.

33. *And they arose in the same hour.*[1] The circumstance of the time, and the distance of the places, show with what ardour those two men turned to convey the intelligence to

[1] "Au mesme instant;"—"at that very instant."

their fellow-disciples. As they entered a lodging towards evening, it is probable that the Lord had not made himself known to them before night came on. To perform a journey of three hours in the dead of night was exceedingly inconvenient; yet they rise that very instant, and return in haste to Jerusalem. And, indeed, if they had only gone thither next day, their tardiness might have exposed them to suspicion; but as they chose rather to deprive themselves of the repose of the night than to allow the slightest delay in making the apostles partakers of their joy, the very haste gave additional credit to their narrative. Now when Luke says that *they arose in the same hour*,[1] it is probable that they came *to the disciples* about midnight. But, according to the testimony of the same Luke, *the disciples* were at that time conversing together; and hence we learn their anxiety, and industry, and ardour, in spending almost the whole night without sleep, and unceasingly making inquiries at each other, until the resurrection of Christ was ascertained by a multitude of testimonies.

34. *Saying, The Lord is actually risen.* By these words Luke means that those persons who had brought to the apostles joyful intelligence to confirm their minds, were informed by the disciples respecting another appearance. Nor can it be doubted that this mutual confirmation was the reward which God bestowed on them for their holy diligence. By a comparison of the time, we may conclude that Peter, after having returned from the sepulchre, was in a state of great perplexity and uncertainty, until Christ showed himself to him, and that, on the very day that he had visited the sepulchre, he obtained his wish. Hence arose that mutual congratulation among the eleven, that there was now no reason to doubt, because *the Lord had appeared to Simon.*

But this appears to disagree with the words of Mark, who says, that the eleven *did not even believe* those two persons; for how could it be that those who were already certain now rejected additional witnesses, and remained in their former

[1] "Au mesme instant;"—"at that very instant."

hesitation? By saying that *he is actually risen*, they acknowledge that the matter is beyond all doubt. First, I reply, that the general phrase contains a *synecdoche;* for some were harder or less ready to believe, and Thomas was more obstinate than all the rest, (John xx. 25.) Secondly, We may easily infer that they were convinced in the same way as usually happens to persons who are astonished, and who do not consider the matter calmly; and we know that such persons are continually falling into various doubts. However that may be, it is evident from Luke, that the greater part of them, in the midst of that overpowering amazement, not only embraced willingly what was told them, but contended with their own distrust; for by the word *actually* they cut off all ground for doubt. And yet we shall soon afterwards see that, a second and a third time, in consequence of their astonishment, they fell back into their former doubts.

36. *Jesus himself stood in the midst of them.* While the Evangelist John copiously details the same narrative, (xx. 19,) he differs from Luke in some circumstances. Mark, too, differs somewhat in his brief statement. As to John, since he only collects what Luke omitted, both may be easily reconciled. There is no contradiction about the substance of the fact; unless some person were to raise a debate about the time; for it is there said that Jesus entered in the evening, while it is evident, from the thread of the narrative, that he appeared at a late hour in the night, when the disciples had returned from Emmaus. But I do not think it right to insist precisely on the hour of the evening. On the contrary, we may easily and properly extend to a late hour of the night what is here said, and understand it to mean that Christ came to them after the evening, when the apostles had shut the doors, and kept themselves concealed within the house. In short, John does not describe the very commencement of the night, but simply means that, when the day was past, and after sunset, and even at the dead hour of night, Christ came to the disciples contrary to their expectation.

Still there arises here another question, since Mark and Luke relate that *the eleven* were assembled, when Christ

appeared to them; and John says that Thomas was then absent, (xx. 24.) But there is no absurdity in saying that the number—*the eleven*—is here put for the apostles themselves, though one of their company was absent. We have lately stated—and the fact makes it evident—that John enters into the details with greater distinctness, because it was his design to relate what the others had omitted. Besides, it is beyond a doubt that the three Evangelists relate the same narrative; since John expressly says that it was only twice that Christ appeared to his disciples at Jerusalem, before they went to Galilee; for he says that *he appeared to them the third time at the sea of Tiberias*, (xxi. 1.) He had already described two appearances of our Lord, one which took place on the day after his resurrection, (xx. 19,) and the other which followed eight days afterwards, (xx. 26;) though, were any one to choose rather to explain the second appearance to be that which is found in the Gospel by Mark, I should not greatly object.

I now return to the words of Luke. He does not, indeed, say that Christ, by his divine power, opened for himself *the doors which were shut*, (John xx. 26;) but something of this sort is indirectly suggested by the phrase which he employs, *Jesus stood.* For how could our Lord suddenly, during the night, *stand in the midst of them*, if he had not entered in a miraculous manner? The same form of salutation is employed by both, *Peace be to you;* by which the Hebrews mean, that for the person whom they address they wish happiness and prosperity.

37. *And they were terrified and affrighted.* John does not mention this terror; but as he also says that Christ showed his hands and sides to the disciples, we may conjecture that some circumstance had been omitted by him. Nor is it at all unusual with the Evangelists, when they aim at brevity, to glance only at a part of the facts. From Luke, too, we learn that the terror excited in them by the strangeness of the spectacle was such, that they durst not trust their eyes. But a little ago, they had come to the conclusion that *the Lord was risen*, (verse 34,) and had spoken of it unhesitatingly

as a matter fully ascertained; and now, when they behold him with their eyes, their senses are struck with astonishment, so that they think he is *a spirit*. Though this error, which arose from weakness, was not free from blame, still they did not so far forget themselves as to be afraid of enchantments. But though they did not think that they are imposed upon, still they are more inclined to believe that an image of the resurrection is exhibited to them in vision by the Spirit, than that Christ himself, who lately died on the cross, is alive and present. So then they did not suspect that this was a vision intended to deceive them, as if it had been an idle phantom, but, seized with fear, they thought only that there was exhibited to them *in spirit* what was actually placed before their eyes.

38. *Why are you troubled?* By these words they are exhorted to lay aside terror, and regain the possession of their minds, that, having returned to the vigour of their senses, they may judge of a matter which is fully ascertained; for so long as men are seized with perturbation, they are blind amidst the clearest light. In order, therefore, that the disciples may obtain undoubted information, they are enjoined to weigh the matter with calmness and composure.

And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? In this second clause, Christ reproves another fault, which is, that by the variety of their *thoughts* they throw difficulties in their own way. By saying that *thoughts arise*, he means that the knowledge of the truth is choked in them in such a manner, that *seeing they do not see*, (Matth. xiii. 14;) for they do not restrain their wicked imaginations, but, on the contrary, by giving them free scope, they permit them to gain the superiority. And certainly we find it to be too true, that as, when the sky has been clear in the morning, clouds afterwards arise to darken the clear light of the sun; so when we allow our reasonings to arise with excessive freedom in opposition to the word of God, what formerly appeared clear to us is withdrawn from our eyes. We have a right, indeed, when any appearance of absurdity presents itself, to inquire by weighing the arguments on both sides; and, indeed, so long as

matters are doubtful, our minds must inevitably be driven about in every direction: but we must observe sobriety and moderation, lest the flesh exalt itself more highly than it ought, and throw out its thoughts far and wide against heaven.

39. *Look at my hands and my feet.* He calls upon their bodily senses as witnesses, that they may not suppose that a shadow is exhibited to them instead of a body. And, first, he distinguishes between a corporeal man and a spirit; as if he had said, "Sight and touch will prove that I am a real man, who have formerly conversed with you; for I am clothed with that flesh which was crucified, and which still bears the marks of it." Again, when Christ declares that his body may be touched, and that it has solid *bones*, this passage is justly and appropriately adduced by those who adhere to us, for the purpose of refuting the gross error about the transubstantiation of bread into the body, or about the local presence of the body, which men foolishly imagine to exist in the Holy Supper. For they would have us to believe that the body of Christ is in a place where no mark of a body can be seen; and in this way it will follow that it has changed its nature, so that it has ceased to be what it was, and from which Christ proves it to be a real body. If it be objected, on the other hand, that his *side* was then pierced, and that his *feet and hands* were pierced and wounded by *the nails*, but that now Christ is in heaven without any vestige of wound or injury, it is easy to dispose of this objection; for the present question is not merely in what form Christ appeared, but what he declares as to the real nature of his flesh. Now he pronounces it to be, as it were, a distinguishing character of his body, that it may be *handled*, and therefore differs from *a spirit*. We must therefore hold that the distinction between *flesh* and *spirit*, which the words of Christ authorize us to regard as perpetual, exists in the present day.

As to the *wounds*, we ought to look upon this as a proof by which it was intended to prove to us all, that Christ rose rather for us than for himself; since, after having vanquished death, and obtained a blessed and heavenly immortality, yet,

on our account, he continued for a time to bear some remaining marks of the cross. It certainly was an astonishing act of condescension towards the disciples, that he chose rather to want something that was necessary to render perfect the glory of the resurrection, than to deprive their faith of such a support. But it was a foolish and an old wife's dream, to imagine that he will still continue to bear the marks of the wounds, when he shall come to judge the world.

Mark XVI. 14. *Afterwards he appeared to the eleven, while they were sitting.* The participle ἀνακειμένοις, which some have rendered *sitting at table*, ought, in my opinion, to be simply rendered *sitting;* and it is not without reason that I take this view of it, if it be agreed that the Evangelist here describes the first appearance; for it would have been an unseasonable hour of supper about midnight. Besides, if the cloth had been laid,[1] this would not have agreed with what Luke shortly afterwards says, that Christ asked if they had any thing to eat. Now, *to sit* is the Hebrew phrase for *resting* in any place.

And upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. This reproof corresponds more to the first appearance than to the second; for since *the disciples*, as John tells us, (xx. 20,) *were glad when they had seen the Lord* on the day after the Passover, their unbelief was then rebuked. To restrict these words of Mark to Thomas alone, as some have done, appears to be forced; and, therefore, I prefer to explain them simply as meaning, that when Christ first appeared to the apostles, he reproved them for not believing the testimony of eye-witnesses, who informed them of his resurrection. And yet when he condemns their hardness of heart, it is not solely because they did not give credit to men, but because, after having been convinced by the result, they did not at length embrace the testimony of the Lord. Since, therefore, *Peter* and *Mary*, *Cleopas* and his companion, were not the first witnesses of the resurrection, but only subscribed to the words of Christ, it follows, that the rest of the apostles

[1] "Si la nappe eust esté mise."

poured dishonour on the Lord by refusing to believe his words, though they had already been proved by their result. Justly, therefore, are they reproached with hardness of heart, because, in addition to their slowness, there was wicked obstinacy; as if they had intentionally desired to suppress what was evidently true; not that they intended to extinguish the glory of their Master, or to accuse him of falsehood, but because their obstinacy stood in the way, and hindered them from being submissive. In short, he does not here condemn them for voluntary obstinacy, as I have already said, but for blind indifference, which sometimes hardens men that otherwise are not wicked or rebellious.

Luke.

XXIV. 41. But while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said to them, Have you here any thing to eat? 42. And they presented to him a piece of a broiled fish, and some honeycomb. 43. And he took, and ate it in their presence. 44. And he said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you; that all things which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me, are fulfilled. 45. Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. 46. And he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was proper that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day; 47. And that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48. And you are witnesses of those things. 49. And, lo, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but remain you in the city of Jerusalem, till you are endued with power from on high.

Luke XXIV. 41. *But while they yet believed not for joy.* This passage shows also that they were not purposely incredulous, like persons who deliberately resolve not to believe; but while their will led them to believe eagerly, they were held bound by the vehemence of their feelings, so that they could not rest satisfied. For certainly the *joy* which Luke mentions arose from nothing but faith; and yet it hindered their faith from gaining the victory. Let us therefore observe with what suspicion we ought to regard the vehemence of our feelings, which, though it may have good beginnings, hurries us out of the right path. We are also reminded how earnestly we ought to struggle against every thing that retards faith, since the *joy* which sprung up in the minds of the

apostles from the presence of Christ was the cause of their unbelief.

43. *And he took, and ate it in their presence.* Here we perceive, on the other hand, how kindly and gently Christ bears with the weakness of his followers, since he does not fail to give them this new support when they are falling. And, indeed, though he has obtained a new and heavenly life, and has no more need of meat and drink than angels have, still he voluntarily condescends to join in the common usages of mortals. During the whole course of his life, he had subjected himself to the necessity of eating and drinking; and now, though relieved from that necessity, he eats for the purpose of convincing his disciples of the certainty of his resurrection. Thus we see how he disregarded himself, and chose always to be devoted to our interests. This is the true and pious meditation on this narrative, in which believers may advantageously rest, dismissing questions of mere curiosity, such as, "Was this corruptible food digested?" "What sort of nourishment did the body of Christ derive from it?" and, "What became of what did not go to nourishment?" As if it had not been in the power of Him who created all things out of nothing to reduce to nothing a small portion of food, whenever he thought fit. As Christ really tasted *the fish and the honeycomb*, in order to show that he was a man, so we cannot doubt that by his divine power he consumed what was not needed to pass into nourishment. Thus the angels, at the table of Abraham, (Gen. xviii. 1,) having been clothed with real bodies, did actually, I have no doubt, eat and drink; but yet I do not therefore admit that the meat and drink yielded them that refreshment which the weakness of the flesh demands; but as they were clothed with a human form for the sake of Abraham, so the Lord granted this favour to his servant, that those heavenly visitors ate before his tent. Now if we acknowledge that the bodies which they assumed for a time were reduced to nothing after they had discharged their embassy, who will deny that the same thing happened as to the food?

44. *These are the words.* Though it will afterwards appear from Matthew and Mark that a discourse similar to this was delivered in Galilee, yet I think it probable that Luke now relates what happened on the day after his resurrection. For what John says of that day, that *he breathed on them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost*, (xx. 22,) agrees with the words of Luke which here immediately follow, that *he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.* By these words Christ indirectly reproves their gross and shameful forgetfulness, that, though they had long ago been fully informed of his future resurrection, they were as much astonished as if it had never been mentioned to them. The import of his words is: "Why do you hesitate as if this had been a new and unexpected occurrence, while it is only what I frequently predicted to you? Why do you not rather remember my words? For if hitherto you have reckoned me worthy of credit, this ought to have been known to you from my instructions before it happened." In short, Christ tacitly complains that his labour has been thrown away on the apostles, since his instruction has been forgotten.

All things which are written concerning me. He now rebukes them more sharply for their slowness, by declaring that he brought forward nothing that was new, but that he only reminded them of what had been declared by *the Law and the Prophets*, with which they ought to have been familiar from their childhood. But though they had been ignorant of the whole doctrine of religion, nothing could have been more unreasonable than not to embrace readily what they knew to have undoubtedly proceeded from God; for it was a principle admitted by the whole nation, that there was no religion but what was contained in *the Law and the Prophets.* The present division of the Scriptures is more copious than what we find in other passages; for *besides the Law and the Prophets*, he adds, in the third place, *the Psalms*, which, though they might with propriety have been reckoned among *the Prophets*, have something distinct and peculiar to themselves. Yet the division into two parts, which we have seen elsewhere, (Luke xvi. 16; John i. 45,) embraces notwithstanding the whole of Scripture.

45. *Then he opened their understanding.* As the Lord had formerly discharged the office of Teacher, with little or no improvement on the part of the disciples, he now begins to teach them inwardly by his Spirit; for words are idly wasted on the air, until the minds are enlightened by the gift of understanding. It is true, indeed, that *the word of God is like a lamp,* (Ps. cxix. 105;) but it shines in darkness and amidst the blind, until the inward light is given by the Lord, to whom it peculiarly belongs to *enlighten the blind,* (Ps. cxlvi. 8.) And hence it is evident how great is the corruption of our nature, since the light of life exhibited to us in the heavenly oracles is of no avail to us. Now if we do not perceive by *the understanding* what is right, how would the will be sufficient for yielding obedience? We ought, therefore, to acknowledge that we come short in every respect, so that the heavenly doctrine proves to be useful and efficacious to us, only so far as the Spirit both forms our minds to understand it, and our hearts to submit to its yoke; and, therefore, that in order to our being properly qualified for becoming his disciples, we must lay aside all confidence in our own abilities, and seek light from heaven; and, abandoning the foolish opinion of free-will, must give ourselves up to be governed by God. Nor is it without reason that Paul bids men *become fools, that they may be wise to God,* (1 Cor. iii. 18;) for no darkness is more dangerous for quenching the light of the Spirit than reliance on our own sagacity.

That they might understand the Scriptures. Let the reader next observe, that the disciples had not the eyes of their mind opened, so as to comprehend the mysteries of God without any assistance, but so far as they are contained in *the Scriptures;* and thus was fulfilled what is said, (Ps. cxix. 18,) *Enlighten mine eyes, that I may behold the wonders of thy law.* For God does not bestow the Spirit on his people, in order to set aside the use of his word, but rather to render it fruitful. It is highly improper, therefore, in fanatics, under the pretence of revelations, to take upon themselves the liberty of despising *the Scriptures;* for what we now read in reference to the apostles is daily accomplished by Christ in all his people, namely, that by his Spirit he guides us *to*

understand the Scriptures, and does not hurry us away into the idle raptures of enthusiasm.

But it may be asked, Why did Christ choose to lose his labour, during the entire period of three years, in teaching them, rather than to *open their understandings* from the very outset? I reply, first, though the fruit of his labour did not immediately appear, still it was not useless; for when the new light was given to them, they likewise perceived the advantage of the former period. For I regard these words as meaning, not only that *he opened their understandings*, that in future they might be ready to receive instruction, if any thing were stated to them, but that they might call to remembrance his doctrine, which they had formerly heard without any advantage. Next, let us learn that this ignorance, which lasted during three years, was of great use for informing them that from no other source than from the heavenly light did they obtain their new discernment. Besides, by this fact Christ gave an undoubted proof of his Divinity; for he not only was the minister of the outward voice, which sounded in their ears, but by his hidden power he penetrated into their minds, and thus showed that what, Paul tells us, does not belong to the teachers of the Church is the prerogative of Him alone, (1 Cor. iii. 7.) Yet it ought to be observed, that the apostles were not so destitute of the light of understanding as not to hold certain elementary principles; but as it was only a slight taste, it is reckoned to be a commencement of true *understanding* when the veil is removed, and they behold Christ in *the Law and the Prophets.*

46. *And he said to them, Thus it is written.* The connection of these words refutes the calumny of those who allege that outward doctrine would be superfluous, if we did not naturally possess some power of understanding. "Why," say they, "would the Lord speak to the deaf?" But we see that, when the Spirit of Christ, who is the inward Teacher, performs his office, the labour of the minister who speaks is not thrown away; for Christ, after having bestowed on his followers the gift of *understanding*, instructs them out of *the*

Scriptures with real advantage. With the reprobate, indeed, though the outward word passes away as if it were dead, still it renders them inexcusable.

As to the words of Christ, they are founded on this principle: "*Whatever is written must be fulfilled*, for God declared nothing by his prophets but what he will undoubtedly accomplish." But by these words we are likewise taught what it is that we ought chiefly to learn from *the Law and the Prophets;* namely, that since Christ is *the end* and the soul *of the law*, (Rom. x. 4,) whatever we learn without him, and apart from him, is idle and unprofitable. Whoever then desires to make great proficiency *in the Scriptures* ought always to keep this end in view. Now Christ here places first in order his death and resurrection, and afterwards the fruit which we derive from both. For whence come repentance and forgiveness of sins, but because *our old man is crucified with Christ*, (Rom. vi. 6,) that by his grace we may rise to *newness of life;* and because our sins have been expiated by the sacrifice of his death, our pollution has been washed away by his blood, and we have obtained righteousness through his resurrection? He teaches, therefore, that in his death and resurrection we ought to seek the cause and grounds of our salvation; because hence arise reconciliation to God, and regeneration to a new and spiritual life. Thus it is expressly stated that neither forgiveness of sins nor repentance can be preached but in his name; for, on the one hand, we have no right to expect the imputation of righteousness, and, on the other hand, we do not obtain self-denial and newness of life, except so far as *he is made to us righteousness and sanctification*, (1 Cor. i. 30.) But as we have elsewhere treated copiously of this summary of the Gospel, it is better to refer my readers to those passages for what they happen not to remember, than to load them with repetitions.

47. *To all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* Christ now discovers clearly what he had formerly concealed—that the grace of the redemption brought by him extends alike *to all nations.* For though the prophets had frequently predicted the calling of the Gentiles, still it was not revealed in such

a manner that the Jews could willingly admit the Gentiles to share with them in the hope of salvation. Till his resurrection, therefore, Christ was not acknowledged to be any thing more than the Redeemer of the chosen people alone; and then, for the first time, was *the wall of partition* (Eph. ii. 14) thrown down, that they who had been *strangers*, (Eph. ii. 19,) and who had formerly been scattered, might be gathered into the fold of the Lord. In the meantime, however, that the covenant of God might not seem to be made void, Christ has assigned to the Jews the first rank, enjoining the apostles to *begin at Jerusalem*. For since God had peculiarly adopted the posterity of Abraham, they must have been preferred to the rest of the world. This is the privilege of the *first-born*, which Jeremiah ascribes to them, when Jehovah says, *I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born*, (xxxi. 9.) This order, too, Paul everywhere observes with the greatest care, telling us that Christ *came and proclaimed peace to those who were near*, and afterwards to strangers who were *at a distance*, (Eph. ii. 17.)

48. *And you are witnesses of those things.* He does not yet commission them to preach the gospel, but only reminds them to what service he has appointed them, that they may prepare themselves for it in due time. He holds out this, partly as a consolation to soothe their grief, and partly as a spur to correct their sloth. Conscious of their recent departure from their Master, they must have been in a state of dejection; and here, contrary to all expectation, Christ bestows on them incredible honour, enjoining them to publish to the whole world the message of eternal salvation. In this manner he not only restores them to their former condition, but by the extent of this new favour he utterly obliterates the recollection of their heinous crimes; but at the same time, as I have said, he stimulates them, that they may not be so slow and dilatory in reference to the faith of which they were appointed to be preachers.

49. *And, lo, I send.* That the apostles may not be terrified by their weakness, he invites them to expect new and extraordinary grace; as if he had said, though you feel yourselves

to be unfit for such a charge, there is no reason why you should despond, because I will send you from heaven that power which I know that you do not possess. The more fully to confirm them in this confidence, he mentions that *the Father had promised to them the Holy Spirit;* for, in order that they might prepare themselves with greater alacrity for the work, God had already encouraged them by his *promise*, as a remedy for their distrust. Christ now puts himself in the place of the Father, and undertakes to perform the promise; in which he again claims for himself divine power. To invest feeble men with heavenly power, is a part of that *glory* which God swears that *he will not give to another:* and, therefore, if it belongs to Christ, it follows that he is that God who formerly spoke by the mouth of the prophet, (Isa. xlii. 8.) And though God promised special grace to the apostles, and Christ bestowed it on them, we ought to hold universally that no mortal is of himself qualified for preaching the gospel, except so far as God clothes him with his Spirit, to supply his nakedness and poverty. And certainly, as it is not in reference to the apostles alone that Paul exclaims, (2 Cor. ii. 16,) *And who shall be found sufficient for these things?* so all whom God raises up to be ministers of the gospel must be endued with the heavenly Spirit; and, therefore, in every part of Scripture he is promised to all the teachers of the Church without exception.

But remain you in the city of Jerusalem. That they may not advance to teach before the proper time, Christ enjoins on them silence and repose, until, sending them out according to his pleasure, he may make a seasonable use of their labours. And this was a useful trial of their obedience, that, after having been endued with the understanding of the Scripture, and after having had the grace of the Spirit *breathed on them*, (John xx. 22,) yet because the Lord had forbidden them to speak, they were silent as if they had been dumb. For we know that those who expect to gain applause and admiration from their hearers are very desirous to appear in public. Perhaps, too, by this delay, Christ intended to punish them for indolence, because they did not, in compliance with his injunction, set out immediately, on the same day, for Galilee.

However that may be, we are taught by their example, that we ought to attempt nothing but as the Lord calls us to it; and, therefore, though they may possess some ability to teach in public, let men remain in silence and retirement, until the Lord lead them by the hand into the public assembly. When they are commanded to *remain at Jerusalem*, we must understand this to mean, after they had returned from Galilee. For, as we shortly afterwards learn from Matthew, though he gave them an opportunity of seeing him at Jerusalem, still he did not change his original intention *to go to Galilee*, (Matth. xxvi. 32, and xxviii. 10.) The meaning of the word, therefore, is, that after having given them injunctions at the appointed place, he wishes them to remain silent for a time, until he supplies them with new vigour.

MATTHEW.	MARK.
XXVIII. 16. But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18. And Jesus approached, and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and on the earth. 19. Go out, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; 20. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.	XVI. 15. And he said to them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16. He who shall believe and be baptized shall be saved; but he who shall not believe shall be condemned. 17. And these signs shall follow those who shall believe: In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Matthew XXVIII. 16. *And the eleven disciples went into Galilee.* Matthew, passing by those occurrences which we have taken out of the other three Evangelists, mentions only in what place *the eleven disciples* were appointed to the apostolic office. For—as we have already had frequent opportunities of perceiving—it was not the intention of the Evangelists to embrace every part of the history; because the Holy Spirit, who guided their pen, has thought fit to compose such a summary as we see out of their united testimonies. Matthew has therefore selected what was of the greatest importance to us, namely, that when Christ appeared

to the disciples, he likewise commissioned them to be apostles, to convey into every part of the world the message of eternal life.

To the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. Though *the mountain* is not mentioned any where else, yet we conclude that this spot *in Galilee* was known to Mary.[1]

17. *But some doubted.* It is wonderful that, after they had twice seen Christ, still *some doubted.* If any one choose to view this as referring to the first appearance, there will be no absurdity in that opinion; for the Evangelists are sometimes in the habit of blending a variety of transactions. But neither would it have the appearance of absurdity to suppose that in some of them the remains of their former terror led them again into hesitation; for we know that, when Christ appeared, they were struck with fear and amazement, till they had recovered their minds, and had become accustomed to his presence. The meaning, therefore, appears to me to be, that *some* at first hesitated, until Christ made a nearer and more familiar approach to them; but that when they certainly and absolutely recognised him, then *they worshipped,* because the splendour of his divine glory was manifest. And perhaps it was the same reason that suddenly caused them to *doubt,* and afterwards led them to *worship him;* namely, that he had laid aside the form of a servant, and had nothing in his appearance but what was heavenly.

18. *And Jesus approached and spoke to them.* His *approach* unquestionably removed all hesitation. Before relating that the office of teaching was committed to the disciples, Matthew says that Christ began by speaking of his *power;* and not without reason. For no ordinary authority would here have been enough, but sovereign and truly divine government ought to be possessed by him who commands them to promise eternal life in his name, to reduce the whole world under his sway, and to publish a doctrine which subdues all pride, and

1 " Que Christ enseigna nommément ce lieu-là a Marie;"—" that Christ expressly informed Mary respecting that place."

lays prostrate the whole of the human race. And by this preface Christ not only encouraged the Apostles to full confidence in the discharge of their office, but confirmed the faith of his gospel in all ages. Never, certainly, would the Apostles have had sufficient confidence to undertake so arduous an office, if they had not known that their Protector sitteth in heaven, and that the highest *authority is given to him;* for without such a support it would have been impossible for them to make any progress. But when they learn that he to whom they owe their services is the Governor of heaven and earth, this alone was abundantly sufficient for preparing them to rise superior to all opposition. As regards the hearers, if the contemptible appearance of those who preach the gospel weakens or retards their faith, let them learn to raise their eyes to the Master himself, by whose power the majesty of the Gospel ought to be estimated, and then they will not venture to depise him when speaking by his ministers.

He expressly calls himself the Lord and King of *heaven and earth*, because, by constraining men to obey him in the preaching of the gospel, he establishes his throne *on the earth;* and, by regenerating his people to a new life, and inviting them to the hope of salvation, he opens *heaven* to admit to a blessed immortality with angels those who formerly had not only crawled on the world, but had been plunged in the abyss of death. Yet let us remember that what Christ possessed in his own right was given to him by the Father in our flesh, or—to express it more clearly—in the person of the Mediator; for he does not lay claim to the eternal power with which he was endued before the creation of the world, but to that which he has now received, by being appointed to be Judge of the world. Nay, more, it ought to be remarked, that this authority was not fully known until he rose from the dead; for then only did he come forth adorned with the emblems of supreme King. To this also relate those words of Paul: *he emptied himself*, (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε,) *therefore God hath exalted him, and given to him a name which is above every other name*, (Phil. ii. 7, 9.) And though, in other passages, the *sitting at the right hand of God* is placed after

the ascension to heaven, as later in the order of time; yet as the resurrection and the ascension to heaven are closely connected with each other, with good reason does Christ now speak of his power in such magnificent terms.

19. *Go out, therefore, and teach all nations.* Though Mark, after having related that Christ *appeared to the eleven disciples*, immediately subjoins the command to *preach the gospel*, he does not speak of these as an unbroken series of events; for we learn from the enumeration of them which is given by Matthew, that the latter event did not take place before they had gone *into Galilee*. The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the gospel everywhere, they should bring *all nations* to the obedience of the faith, and next, that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the gospel. In Matthew, they are first taught simply to *teach;* but Mark expresses the kind of doctrine, that they should *preach the gospel;* and shortly afterwards Matthew himself adds this limitation, to *teach them to observe all things whatsoever the Lord hath commanded.*

Let us learn from this passage, that the apostleship is not an empty title, but a laborious office; and that, consequently, nothing is more absurd or intolerable than that this honour should be claimed by hypocrites, who live like kings at their ease, and disdainfully throw away from themselves the office of *teaching*. The Pope of Rome and his band proudly boast of their succession, as if they held this rank in common with Peter and his companions; and yet they pay no more regard to doctrine than was paid by the *Luperci*, or the priests of *Bacchus* and *Venus*.[1] And with what face, pray, do they

[1] The God *Pan*, in honour of whom the grossest indecency was practised at the festival of the *Lupercalia*,—*Bacchus*, the patron of drunkenness,—and *Venus*, the patroness of licentiousness,—recall to every one who is familiar with classical literature the degraded state of morals into which Rome had sunk amidst the proudest triumphs of civilization. Ancient Heathenism, like the Braminism of modern Hindostan, offered a ready apology for every species of crime, and associated with the history of its gods, and with the most sacred duties of religion, scenes so utterly impure, and so much fitted to inflame the basest passions, that the bare recital of them would offend a modest ear. By the present allusion, CALVIN means something more than meets the eye, and reminds us that

claim to be the successors of those who, they are told, were appointed to be preachers of the gospel? But though they are not ashamed to display their impudence, still with every reader of sound judgment this single word is sufficient to lay prostrate their silly hierarchy—that no man can be a successor of the apostles who does not devote his services to Christ in the preaching of the gospel. In short, whoever does not fulfil the duties of a teacher acts wickedly and falsely by assuming the name of an apostle; and—what is more—the priesthood of the New Testament consists in slaying men, as a sacrifice to God, by the spiritual sword of the word. Hence it follows, that all are but pretended and spurious priests who are not devoted to the office of teaching.

Teach all nations. Here Christ, by removing the distinction, makes the Gentiles equal to the Jews, and admits both indiscriminately to a participation in the covenant. Such is also the import of the term *go out;* for the prophets under the law had limits assigned to them, but now, *the wall of partition having been broken down*, (Eph. ii. 14,) the Lord commands the ministers of the gospel to go to a distance, in order to spread the doctrine of salvation in every part of the world. For though, as we have lately suggested, the right of the first-born,[1] at the very commencement of the gospel, remained among the Jews, still the inheritance of life was common to the Gentiles. Thus was fulfilled that prediction of Isaiah, (xlix. 6,) and others of a similar nature, that Christ was *given for a light of the Gentiles, that he might be the salvation of God to the end of the earth.* Mark means the same thing by *every creature;* for when *peace* has been proclaimed to those that are within the Church, the same message reaches those who are *at a distance*, and were *strangers*, (Eph. ii. 17, 19.) How necessary it was that the apostles should

the Pope and his clergy not only "paid as little regard to Christian doctrine as the priests of Pan, and Bacchus, and Venus," but that they too closely resembled them in the flagrant immorality of their lives. Above all, he points to the refinements of casuistry, the shocking disclosures of the confessional, and the profligacy of monastic life, in all of which, under the cloak of religion, practices, *of which it is a shame even to speak*, (Eph. v. 12,) received the most direct encouragement.—*Ed.*

[1] See p. 378.

be distinctly informed of the calling of the Gentiles, is evident from this consideration, that even after having received the command, they felt the greatest horror at approaching them, as if by doing so they polluted themselves and their doctrine.

Baptizing them. Christ enjoins that those who have submitted to the gospel, and professed to be his disciples, shall be *baptized;* partly that their *baptism* may be a pledge of eternal life before God, and partly that it may be an outward sign of faith before men. For we know that God testifies to us the grace of adoption by this sign, because he ingrafts us into the body of his Son, so as to reckon us among his flock; and, therefore, not only our spiritual washing, by which he reconciles us to himself, but likewise our new righteousness, are represented by it. But as God, by this seal, confirms to us his grace, so all who present themselves for *baptism* do, as it were, by their own signature, ratify their faith. Now since this charge is expressly given to the apostles along with the preaching of the word, it follows that none can lawfully administer *baptism* but those who are also the ministers of doctrine. When private persons, and even women, are permitted to *baptize*, nothing can be more at variance with the ordinance of Christ, nor is it any thing else than a mere profanation. Besides, as doctrine is placed first in order, this points out to us the true distinction between this mystery and the bastard rites of the Gentiles, by which they are initiated into their sacred mysteries; for the earthly element does not become a sacrament until God quickens it by his word. As superstition improperly counterfeits all the works of God, foolish men forge various sacraments at their pleasure; but as the word, which is the soul, is not in them, they are idle and unmeaning shadows. Let us therefore hold that the power of the doctrine causes the signs to assume a new nature; as the outward working of the flesh begins to be the spiritual pledge of regeneration, when it is preceded by the doctrine of the gospel; and this is the true consecration—instead of which, Popery has introduced to us the enchantments of sorcery.

Accordingly, it is said in Mark, *He that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.* By these words Christ not only ex-

cludes from the hope of salvation hypocrites who, though destitute of faith, are puffed up only by the outward sign; but by a sacred bond he connects *baptism* with doctrine, so that the latter is nothing more than an appendage of the former. But as Christ enjoins them to *teach* before *baptizing*, and desires that none but *believers* shall be admitted to *baptism*, it would appear that *baptism* is not properly administered unless when it is preceded by faith. On this pretence, the *Anabaptists* have stormed greatly against infant baptism. But the reply is not difficult, if we attend to the reason of the command. Christ orders them to convey *to all nations* the message of eternal salvation, and confirms it by adding the seal of baptism. Now it was proper that *faith* in the word should be placed before *baptism*, since the Gentiles were altogether alienated from God, and had nothing in common with the chosen people; for otherwise it would have been a false figure, which offered forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit to unbelievers, who were not yet members of Christ. But we know that by *faith* those who were formerly despised are united to the people of God.

It is now asked, on what condition does God adopt as children those who formerly were aliens? It cannot, indeed, be denied that, when he has once received them into his favour, he continues to bestow it on their children and their children's children. By the coming of Christ God manifested himself as a Father equally to the Gentiles and to the Jews; and, therefore, that promise, which was formerly given to the Jews, must now be in force towards the Gentiles, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee*, (Gen. xvii. 7.) Thus we see that they who entered by faith into the Church of God are reckoned, along with their posterity, among the members of Christ, and, at the same time, called to the inheritance of salvation. And yet this does not involve the separation of *baptism* from faith and doctrine; because, though infants are not yet of such an age as to be capable of receiving the grace of God by faith, still God, when addressing their parents, includes them also. I maintain, therefore, that it is not rash to administer baptism to infants, to which God invites them, when he promises that *he will be their God.*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This passage shows that the full and clear knowledge of God, which had been but darkly shadowed out under *the Law and the Prophets,* is at length fully discovered under the reign of Christ. True, indeed, the ancients would never have ventured to call God their *Father,* if they had not derived this assurance from Christ their Head; and the Eternal Wisdom of God, who is the fountain of light and life, was not wholly unknown to them. It was even one of their acknowledged principles, that God displays his power by *the Holy Spirit.* But at the commencement of the gospel God was far more clearly revealed in Three Persons; for then the Father manifested himself in the Son, his lively and distinct image, while Christ, irradiating the world by the full splendour of his Spirit, held out to the knowledge of men both himself and the Spirit.

There are good reasons why *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,* are expressly mentioned; for there is no other way in which the efficacy of *baptism* can be experienced than when we begin with the unmerited mercy of *the Father,* who reconciles us to himself by the only begotten *Son;* next, Christ comes forward with the sacrifice of his death; and at length, *the Holy Spirit* is likewise added, by whom he washes and regenerates us, (Tit. iii. 5,) and, in short, makes us partakers of his benefits. Thus we perceive that God cannot be truly known, unless our faith distinctly conceive of Three Persons in one essence; and that the fruit and efficacy of *baptism* proceed from God *the Father* adopting us through his *Son,* and, after having cleansed us from the pollutions of the flesh through *the Spirit,* creating us anew to righteousness.

Mark XVI. 16. *He who shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.* This promise was added in order to allure all mankind to *believe;* as it is followed, on the other hand, by a threatening of awful destruction, in order to terrify unbelievers. Nor is it wonderful that salvation is promised to *believers;* for, by *believing* in the only begotten Son of God, not only are they reckoned among the children of God, but receiving the gift of free justification and of the Spirit of regeneration, they possess what constitutes eternal life. *Bap-*

tism is joined to the *faith* of the gospel, in order to inform us that the mark of our salvation is engraven on it; for had it not served to testify the grace of God, it would have been improper in Christ to have said, that *they who shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.* Yet, at the same time, we must hold that it is not required as absolutely necessary to salvation, so that all who have not obtained it must perish; for it is not added to faith, as if it were the half of the cause of our salvation, but as a testimony. I readily acknowledge that men are laid under the necessity of not despising the sign of the grace of God; but though God uses such aids in accommodation to the weakness of men, I deny that his grace is limited to them. In this way we will say that it is not necessary in itself, but only with respect to our obedience.

But he who shall not believe shall be condemned. By this second clause, in which Christ *condemns those who shall not believe*, he means that rebels, when they reject the salvation offered to them, draw down upon themselves severer punishment, and not only are involved in the general destruction of mankind, but bear the guilt of their own ingratitude.

17. *And these signs shall follow them that shall believe.* As the Lord, while he still lived with men in the world, had ratified the faith of his gospel by miracles, so now he extends the same power to the future, lest the disciples should imagine that it could not be separated from his bodily presence. For it was of very great importance that this divine power of Christ should continue to be exerted amongst *believers*, that it might be certainly known that he was risen from the dead, and that thus his doctrine might remain unimpaired, and that his name might be immortal. When he says that *believers* will receive this gift, we must not understand this as applying to every one of them; for we know that gifts were distributed variously, so that the power of working miracles was possessed by only a few persons. But as that which was bestowed on a few was common to the whole Church, and as the miracles performed by one individual served for the confirmation of all, Christ properly uses the word *believers* in an indefinite sense. The meaning,

therefore, is, that *believers* will be ministers of the same power which had formerly excited admiration in Christ, that during his absence the sealing of the gospel may be more fully ascertained, as he promises *that they will do the same things, and greater*, (John xiv. 12.) To testify the glory and the divinity of Christ, it was enough that a few of the *believers* should be endued with this power.

Though Christ does not expressly state whether he intends this gift to be temporary, or to remain perpetually in his Church, yet it is more probable that miracles were promised only for a time, in order to give lustre to the gospel, while it was new and in a state of obscurity. It is possible, no doubt, that the world may have been deprived of this honour through the guilt of its own ingratitude; but I think that the true design for which miracles were appointed was, that nothing which was necessary for proving the doctrine of the gospel should be wanting at its commencement. And certainly we see that the use of them ceased not long afterwards, or, at least, that instances of them were so rare as to entitle us to conclude that they would not be equally common in all ages.

Yet those who came after them, that they might not allow it to be supposed that they were entirely destitute of miracles, were led by foolish avarice or ambition to forge for themselves miracles which had no reality. Thus was the door opened for the impostures of Satan, not only that delusions might be substituted for truth, but that, under the pretence of miracles, the simple might be led aside from the true faith. And certainly it was proper that men of eager curiosity, who, not satisfied with lawful proof, were every day asking new miracles, should be carried away by such impostures. This is the reason why Christ, in another passage, foretold that the reign of Antichrist would be full of *lying signs*, (Matth. xxiv. 24;) and Paul makes a similar declaration, (2 Thess. ii. 9.)

That our faith may be duly confirmed by miracles, let our minds be kept within that moderation which I have mentioned. Hence, also, it follows that it is a silly calumny which is advanced by those who object against our doctrine,

that it wants the aid of miracles; as if it were not the same doctrine which Christ long ago has abundantly sealed. But on this subject I use greater brevity, because I have already treated it more fully in many passages.

Matthew XXVIII. 20. *Teaching them to observe all things.* By these words, as I have formerly suggested, Christ shows that, in sending the apostles, he does not entirely resign his office, as if he ceased to be the Teacher of his Church; for he sends away the apostles with this reservation, that they shall not bring forward their own inventions, but shall purely and faithfully deliver from hand to hand (as we say) what he has intrusted to them. Would to God that the Pope would subject to this rule the power which he claims for himself; for we would easily permit him to be the successor of Peter or of Paul, provided that he did not usurp a tyrannical dominion over our souls. But as he has set aside the authority of Christ, and infects the Church with his childish fooleries, this shows plainly enough how widely he has departed from the apostolic office. In short, let us hold that by these words teachers are appointed over the Church, not to put forward whatever they may think proper, but that they, as well as others, may depend on the mouth of the Master alone, so as to gain disciples for him, and not for themselves.

And, lo, I am with you always. As Christ gave to the apostles a commission which they were unable to discharge by reliance on merely human power, he encourages them by the assurance of his heavenly protection. For before promising that he would be with them, he began with declaring that he is the King *of heaven and earth*, who governs all things by his power and authority.

The pronoun *I* must be viewed as emphatic; as if he had said that the apostles, if they wished zealously to perform their duty, must not consider what they are able to do, but must rely on the invincible power of those under whose banner they fight. The nature of that presence which the Lord promises to his followers ought to be understood spiritually; for it is not necessary that he should descend from heaven in order to assist us, since he can assist us by the grace of his

Spirit, as if he stretched out his hand from heaven. For he who, in respect of his body, is at a great distance from us, not only diffuses the efficacy of his Spirit through the whole world, but even actually dwells in us.

Even to the end of the world. It ought likewise to be remarked, that this was not spoken to the apostles alone; for the Lord promises his assistance not for a single age only, but *even to the end of the world.* It is as if he had said, that though the ministers of the gospel be weak and suffer the want of all things, he will be their guardian, so that they will rise victorious over all the opposition of the world. In like manner, experience clearly shows in the present day, that the operations of Christ are carried on wonderfully in a secret manner, so that the gospel surmounts innumerable obstacles.

So much the more intolerable is the wickedness of the Popish clergy, when they take this as a pretext for their sacrilege and tyranny. They affirm that the Church cannot err, because it is governed by Christ; as if Christ, like some private soldier, hired himself for wages to other captains, and as if he had not, on the contrary, reserved the entire authority for himself, and declared that he would defend his doctrine, so that his ministers may confidently expect to be victorious over the whole world.

MARK.	LUKE.
XVI. 19. And after the Lord had thus spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by accompanying signs.	XXIV. 50. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51. And it came to pass that, while he was blessing them, he withdrew from them, and was carried up into heaven. 52. And having worshipped him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53. And were always in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Mark XVI. 19. *And after the Lord had thus spoken to them.* The Evangelist Matthew, having extolled in magnificent language the reign of Christ over the whole world, says nothing about his ascension to heaven. Mark, too, takes no

notice of the place and the manner, both of which are described by Luke; for he says that *the disciples were led out to Bethany*, that from *the Mount of Olives*, (Matth. xxiv. 3,) whence he had descended to undergo the ignominy of the cross, he might ascend the heavenly throne. Now as he did not, after his resurrection, appear indiscriminately to all, so he did not permit all to be the witnesses of his ascension to heaven; for he intended that this mystery of faith should be known by the preaching of the gospel rather than beheld by the eyes.

Luke XXIV. 50. *And lifted up his hands, and blessed them;* by which he showed that the office of *blessing*, which was enjoined on the priests under the law, belonged truly and properly to himself. When men *bless* one another, it is nothing else than praying in behalf of their brethren; but with God it is otherwise, for he does not merely befriend us by wishes, but by a simple act of his will grants what is desirable for us. But while He is the only Author of all blessing, yet that men might obtain a familiar view of his grace, he chose that at first the priests should *bless* in his name as mediators. Thus Melchizedek *blessed* Abraham, (Gen. xiv. 19,) and in Numbers, vi. 23-27, a perpetual law is laid down in reference to this matter. To this purport also is what we read in Psalm cxviii. 26, *We bless you out of the house of the Lord.* In short, the apostle has told us that *to bless* others is a mark of superiority; for *the less*, he says, *is blessed by the greater*, (Heb. vii. 7.) Now when Christ, the true *Melchizedek* and eternal Priest, was manifested, it was necessary that in him should be fulfilled what had been shadowed out by the figures of the law; as Paul also shows that we are *blessed* in him by God the Father, that we may be rich in all heavenly blessings, (Eph. i. 3.) Openly and solemnly he once *blessed* the apostles, that believers may go direct to himself, if they desire to be partakers of his grace. In *the lifting up of the hands* is described an ancient ceremony which, we know, was formerly used by the priests.

52. *And having worshipped him, they returned.* By the

word *worship*, Luke means, first, that the apostles were relieved from all doubt, because at that time the majesty of Christ shone on all sides, so that there was no longer any room for doubting of his resurrection; and, secondly, that for the same reason they began to honour him with greater reverence than when they enjoyed his society on earth. For the *worship* which is here mentioned was rendered to him not only as Master or Prophet, nor even as the Messiah, whose character had been but half known, but as the King of glory and the Judge of the world. Now as Luke intended to give a longer narrative, he only states briefly what the apostles did during ten days. The amount of what is said is, that through *the fervour of their joy* they broke out openly into the *praises of God, and were continually in the temple;* not that they remained there by day and by night, but that they attended the public assemblies, and were present at the ordinary and stated hours to *render thanksgiving* to God. This *joy* is contrasted with the fear which formerly kept them retired and concealed at home.

Mark XVI. 19. *And sat down at the right hand of God.* In other passages I have explained what is meant by this expression, namely, that Christ was raised on high, that he might be exalted above angels and all creatures; that by his agency the Father might govern the world, and, in short, that *before him every knee might bow*, (Philip. ii. 10.) It is the same as if he were called God's Deputy, to represent the person of God; and, therefore, we must not imagine to ourselves any one place, since *the right hand* is a metaphor which denotes the power that is next to God. This was purposely added by Mark, in order to inform us that Christ *was taken up into heaven*, not to enjoy blessed rest at a distance from us, but to govern the world for the salvation of all believers.

20. *And they went out and preached.* Mark here notices briefly those events of which Luke continues the history in

his second book,[1] that the voice of a small and dispersed body of men resounded even to the extremities of the world. For exactly in proportion as the fact was less credible, so much the more manifestly was there displayed in it a miracle of heavenly power. Every person would have thought that, by the death of the cross, Christ would either be altogether extinguished, or so completely overwhelmed, that he would never be again mentioned but with shame and loathing. The apostles, whom he had chosen to be his witnesses, had basely deserted him, and had betaken themselves to darkness and concealment. Such was their ignorance and want of education, and such was the contempt in which they were held, that they hardly ventured to utter a word in public. Was it to be expected that men who were unlearned, and were held in no esteem, and had even deserted their Master, should, by the sound of their voice, reduce so many scattered nations into subjection to him who had been crucified? There is great emphasis, therefore, in the words, *they went out and preached everywhere*—men who but lately shut themselves up, trembling and silent, in their prison. For it was impossible that so sudden a change should be accomplished in a moment by human power; and therefore Mark adds,

The Lord working with them; by which he means that this was truly a divine work. And yet by this mode of expression he does not represent them as sharing their work or labour with the grace of God, as if they contributed any thing to it of themselves; but simply means that they were assisted by God, because, according to the flesh, they would in vain have attempted what was actually performed by them. The ministers of the word, I acknowledge, are called *fellow-workers with God*, (1 Cor. iii. 9,) because he makes use of their agency; but we ought to understand that they have no power beyond what he bestows, and that by *planting and watering* they do no good, unless the increase come from the secret efficacy of the Spirit.

[1] That inspired book which is now generally known by the name of *The Acts of the Apostles*, was often denominated, by older writers, *Second Luke.—Ed.*

And confirming the word. Here, in my opinion, Mark points out a particular instance of what he had just now stated in general terms; for there were other methods by which the Lord *wrought with them*, that the preaching of the gospel might not be fruitless; but this was a striking proof of his assistance, that he confirmed their doctrine by miracles. Now this passage shows what use we ought to make of miracles, if we do not choose to apply them to perverse corruptions; namely, that they aid the gospel. Hence it follows that God's holy order is subverted, if miracles are separated from the word of God, to which they are appendages; and if they are employed to adorn wicked doctrines, or to disguise corrupt modes of worship.

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TO THE

COMMENTARY

ON A

HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS,

MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE.

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THE END.

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